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ABSTRACT

This junior high school level student manual contains three units on the role of women in world history. The units, designed to supplement what is customarily taught in world history courses at this level, are entitled Women Under Feudalism: Western Europe and China, Women in the Industrial Revolution, and Women in Change: 20th Century Women in Transition. Readings for Unit I include a narrative about the marriage of two 11-year-old children, an essay on women in the economy in Feudal Europe, women in the Chinese patriarchy, and a legend of Hua Mu Lan, the woman warrior. In Unit II students read an essay on women before the industrial revolution, a narrative on child labor in England and Japan, and on the real and ideal middle class woman. Readings in Unit III focus on the revolt of the mother: women in South Africa, China, and Cuba; and a brief history of international women's day. Each unit contains worksheets, illustrations, and charts, questions for discussion, and suggested activities which focus on interviewing people for oral histories. For teacher's guide see SO 013 234. (KC)

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World History Student Manual

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UNIT 1

Women under Feudalism in Western Europe and China

WOMEN UNDER FEUDALISM IN WESTERN EUROPE AND CHINA
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DEFINITION OF TERMS

TERMS YOU NEED TO KNOW

PATRIARCHY

Patri means father. *Arch* means rule by. *Patriarchy* means *rule by the father*. Patriarchy is a method for structuring society. Patriarchy uses the family as a model. The patriarchal family model looks like a pyramid:

- The oldest male, grandfather or father, is the head of the family, or *patriarch*. His rule is law. He is at the top.
- The oldest son is the next person in power. He will inherit any family property from his father.
- Next to the bottom is the wife.
- At the bottom of the pyramid is the daughter.

This family structure is a hierarchy. Men are at the top. They have superiority. Women are placed in lower positions. As inferiors, it is important that their behavior toward their superiors is correct. We said that patriarchy is a method for structuring society. This means that all family members have positions on the family pyramid, and within the pyramid of society as well.

Who do you think is a likely candidate for patriarch of feudal society in Western Europe? in China?

Where do you think women are positioned on the society pyramid?

HIERARCHY

A *hierarchy* is a system of ranking people from lower to higher in importance. The work people do and the compensation they receive depend on their place in the hierarchy. In government and business today, there are hierarchies of jobs and salaries. In the feudal hierarchies of Europe and Asia, 95% of the population, as peasants, was at the lower levels.

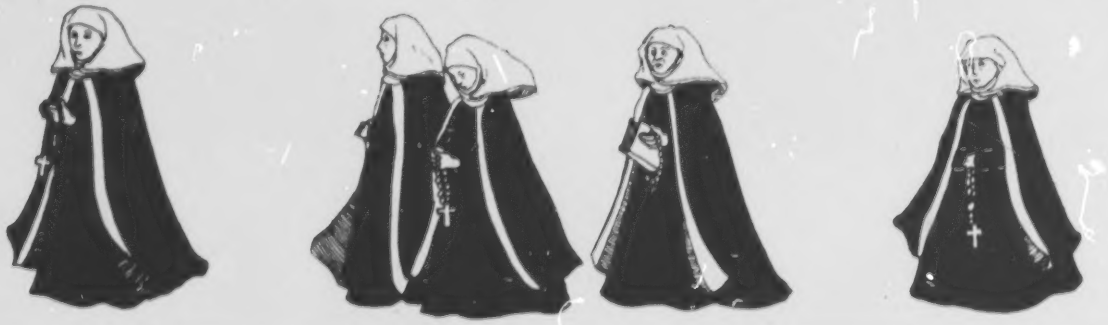
There were *two fixed classes* under feudalism, the *nobility* who owned the land, and the *peasants* who worked the land. No matter what their class, *women* were considered inferior to men, although *upper-class women had more rights than peasant men.* Even in the family, *women* always had lesser authority.

Hierarchy is a way of organizing groups of people so that the many are seen as less worthy than the few.

FEUDALISM

Under feudalism there are two *classes* of people: the *nobility* and the *peasants*. The nobility have immense *power* and wealth because they have seized control of the *land*. They are the *landowners*. The nobility extract *services* from people by their control of the land. They exchange land with *knights* in return for *military service*. Peasants work the land for the nobility; in return they are allowed to live on the land. In Western Europe, the *Catholic Church* is one of the biggest feudal landowners. In China, the emperor is at the top of the social pyramid.

Feudalism is a kind of *patriarchy*. Feudal society was organized as a *hierarchy*.



EUROPEAN SAYINGS

Woman's authority is nil.

The female is more imperfect than the male.

For Adam was first formed, then Eve.

If you have a female child, "set her to sewing and not to reading . . ."
Paolo da Certaldo, *Handbook of Good Customs*, circa 1360, p. 169

. . . idleness is a great danger to both man and woman, but more to the woman

CHINESE SAYINGS

If women sow, the seeds won't grow.

Never trust a woman, even though she has given you ten sons.

If women enter the stable, the draft animals won't prosper.

Marry a man if you want food and clothes.

Women are as useful as a deaf ear.

Women have long hair but short ideas.

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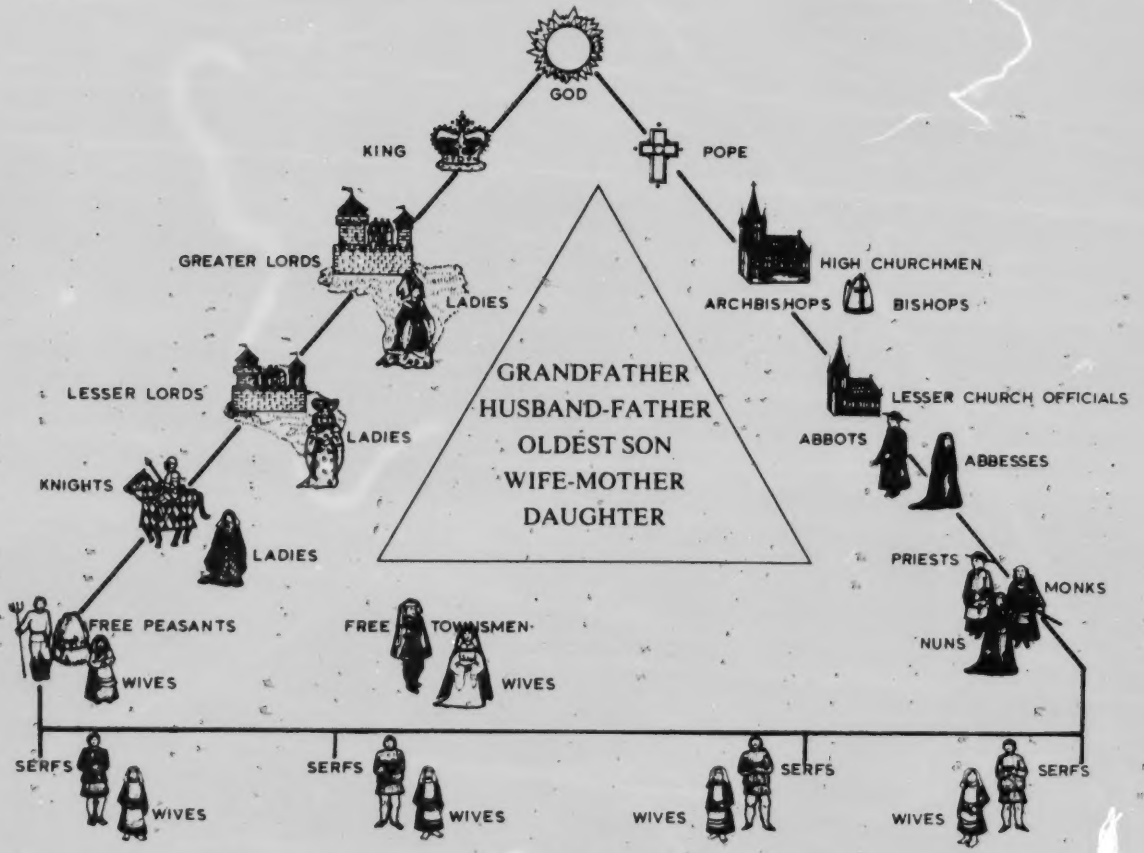
FEUDAL HIERARCHY IN WESTERN EUROPE

CHART

The picture shows which people had *power* during feudal times. For everyone in feudal Europe, God was the *highest* authority. On each level, *men* were *closer to God.* Therefore men had *more power than women.*



FEUDAL HIERARCHY IN WESTERN EUROPE

Read the descriptions of the people below and see if you can place them by *NUMBER* and *NAME* on the blank chart.

1. The highest religious official.
2. The lowest men on the chart are serfs. Who takes orders from them?
3. Ladies who owe absolute obedience to knights.
4. The highest feudal authority who sometimes fought with the Pope for power.
5. The highest women officials of the Church.
6. Warriors who made up the armies of their lords. Show by an arrow where their loyalty belonged.
7. Men who also owned land, but owed their loyalty as vassals to the greater lords.
8. The king depended on these people when he fought other kings.
9. Women who chose to escape from marriage and the absolute rule of husbands or fathers.
10. Religious officials who owned as much land and power as the greater lords.
11. This chart does not show the real proportion of the population on each level. Check with your text to get the correct percentages for the two fixed classes under feudalism. On the diagram below, write the *name* of *each class* and what *percentage* of the *population* it represented.

_____ = _____% of population

_____ = _____% of population

THE WIFE OF MARTIN GUERRE
AN ADAPTATION*

Bertrande and Martin[1] are eleven years old and it is their wedding day. They are not, however, childhood sweethearts hopelessly in love. On the contrary, they have never spoken to each other. They had no part in choosing one another. Their union is adult business, beginning with the betrothal when the two children were infants. Their marriage is an arrangement to bring greater wealth to two well-to-do French peasant families and to end a thirty-year feud. 1

At the feast which follows the wedding, the adults have fun, eating and drinking and laughing. Nobody pays any attention to the young bride and groom. Later that evening, the children are put to bed together by the adults. This custom symbolizes the completion of the marriage. Both lie still and silent, not touching each other, while the families linger around the bed, laughing and joking. 2

Much to Bertrande's relief, Martin turns away without speaking and falls asleep quickly. Bertrande lies awake thinking about her new father-in-law, Martin's father. He seems very stern and harsh. As patriarch of the family, this man has her life in his power. Martin is the only son and heir, but he will remain a legal minor until his father dies. He must do whatever the father orders. Bertrande must obey Martin's commands as well as his father's. She wonders what will happen if she should ever do something wrong, or if she does not please Martin or his father. With these unhappy thoughts, she dozes off. 3

In the morning, she returns to her own home to live until she is old enough to take on the responsibilities of a rich peasant's wife. When she is 14 years old, her mother dies. Bertrande is sent

*From *The Wife of Martin Guerre*, by Janet Lewis.

[1]Bertrande and Martin Guerre were real people according to court records. Their family and friends are fictional characters created by the author.

to live in Martin's house as his wife. She arrives, barefoot, in work clothes, bringing her dowry of linens and silver. Her mother-in-law greets her kindly and shows her around the farm.

4

How orderly it all looks! Bertrande has never seen so many large storerooms filled with baskets of fruit and chestnuts, pots of honey and stone crocks of chicken and goose preserved in oil. There is a special room for the loom and the wool and flax for the distaff. Martin's mother explains that Bertrande's special duties will be in the dairy to keep the milk sweet, help make cheese and store eggs. In the large garden, Bertrande recognizes many vegetables her own family grows for their table. She hopes that she will be able to work out here.

5

That evening she meets Martin's father for the second time. He is very quiet and serious, but he doesn't frighten Bertrande this time. She feels very safe in his presence. He is the absolute ruler of the household and everyone obeys his commands. He seems so certain of himself that Bertrande is sure no harm can come to her or the family as long as he is around. It is the power of the father that gives the family strength and holds it together.

6

In the first few years, Martin treats Bertrande like one of his sisters. One day Martin goes bear hunting without his father's permission. When he returns, his father hits him and breaks his jaw. Martin says his father was right to punish him but Bertrande feels the punishment was too harsh. His mother explains to them both as she weeps and treats the injured jaw, "If you have no obedience for your father, your son will have none for you. Then what will become of the family? Ruin. Despair."

7

Bertrande has a son when she is twenty years old. Life seems very beautiful to her. She loves Martin very much. She enjoys the chores—feeding animals, helping with cooking and spinning wool. Martin's parents treat her with new respect as the mother of a son who will be the heir to the family property.

8

She is proud of her responsibilities as the future mistress of the household. In addition to helping in the kitchen, she now supervises the work in the dairy. Also, it is her spinning, weaving, and sewing which provides clothing for the entire household.

9

However, Martin is restless and impatient with his father's restrictions. One day he tells Bertrande that he is leaving home for awhile. He has taken some of his father's grain to plant his own fields. He knows he will be punished severely. Martin is afraid of his father's anger. In those days, children regarded their parents, especially the father, as the true image of God upon earth.

10

Martin says he will return in a week or so when his father will realize how right he was and forgive him. But many weeks, then months, pass and Martin does not return. After the first year, Bertrande realizes that Martin has found freedom from his father's rules more precious than his wife and child and farm. She is sure he will return only when his father's death will allow him to claim his inheritance.

11

Bertrande is ashamed and hurt by Martin's desertion. But she is helpless to protest or complain. When he returns, he will be master of the house. For a wife to complain about a husband's behavior would be like treason against God. Bertrande has been taught from childhood to obey those she feels are her superiors: God, King, and the family patriarch. As her husband, Martin represents all of these. If she criticizes him, she is being disrespectful to the others.

12

Bertrande keeps silent, trying to find happiness in the care of her little boy, Sanxi. In the second year of Martin's absence, his mother dies. Bertrande becomes the mistress of the house. She supervises the servants and Martin's sisters, but there is no laughter in the house.

13

Four years after Martin's leaving, his father is thrown from a horse, and dies instantly. His brother, Pierre, comes to live in the house as its master. Bertrande feels secure with his presence, but she hopes that Martin will now return. She invites travelers to the house for food and shelter so they will spread the news of her father-in-law's death wherever they go. She even travels herself to the nearest town to tell the local priest to make announcements in church. She asks innkeepers to put up public notices. Her hopes are high that she will soon see her husband again.

14

But years pass by without any word at all of Martin. Bertrande accepts her fate as a widow, because now she believes that he is dead. She spends more and more time with her little boy.

One afternoon, eight years after Martin's disappearance, Martin's uncle and sisters burst into the house crying, "Martin is back! Martin is here!" Bertrande is so shocked that she can hardly stand. She leans against a chair and looks at this man who appears in the doorway. It is not the Martin that she remembers. He looks like Martin, and yet he doesn't. He seems shorter, with a fuller figure. However, the eyes shining over the full beard look very much like Martin's and as he moves toward her, she lets her emotions show. Everyone is crying and hugging and kissing one another. The little boy, Sanxi, hides behind his mother's skirts when Martin asks for him. But, gradually, during the evening he overcomes his shyness and sits closer and closer to his father.

That night, Bertrande tells Martin that he seems strange to her, that she cannot believe that it is really he. Martin then tells her of the years he has spent fighting in wars in many parts of France and Spain and of the hundreds of people he has met. All these experiences, he says, have changed him. He is not the old Martin. Bertrande is so happy to have a husband that she allows herself to love and be loved.

Martin takes over the running of the farm and everything prospers. He has a way of treating the serfs and the household servants with kindness and humor so that they work harder just to please him. Bertrande is amazed by this change in the old silent and stern Martin. It is with his son that the new Martin really seems a stranger. He is so affectionate and loving with the little boy, so unlike the Martin she had known. All of these changes make Bertrande fearful that this man is not her true husband, but when she confesses these fears, he laughs at her, saying, "You are pregnant now. And pregnant women often have strange ideas. Wait until your baby is born, and you won't feel like this."

So Bertrande is relieved. She tries to put her doubts aside and enjoy life with this new loving husband. However, after a baby son is born, her suspicions do not disappear. Bertrande begins to think to herself, "If this man is *not* Martin, then I have committed adultery. I will be doomed to burn in hell forever."

She becomes so frightened that she goes to the priest for help. But when she tells him of her fears, he is astonished. "What are you accusing him of? Kindness?" He tells her she is imagining things and not to worry about sinning.

When she speaks of her suspicions to one of Martin's sisters, she is told that she is mad and an ungrateful wife. Finally, she

realizes that this man has become so well loved by everyone in the family and the community that no one will listen to her doubts. She sees no way to rid herself of the sin she is sure she has committed.

Finally, one day a wandering soldier, home from the wars, denounces Martin as an impostor because he has no wooden leg. This man says that the real Martin Guerre lost a leg in the wars and now has a wooden one. The family angrily sends the soldier away, but Bertrande knows now that she is right. She has some real evidence that her husband is an impostor and that she is not mad.

She convinces Uncle Pierre that she is correct about Martin, and he goes to the authorities. The soldiers arrive and lead Martin off to prison in chains. The whole family rushes out to bid him good-bye, crying and kissing him. The little boy, Sanxi, will not speak to his mother at all. Bertrande stands alone by the cold and empty fireplace as Martin is led off.

At the trial, witnesses testify that this Martin is a rogue (rascal) by the name of Arnaud du Tilh, and that he does indeed look a great deal like Martin Guerre. However, all of the family except Pierre, testify that it is the real Martin Guerre. The judges decide that the wife's testimony is the most important. They sentence him to death by beheading. Bertrande is horrified and calls out, "No! No! I didn't ask for his death!"

Martin's sisters appeal the verdict, and a new trial is set in Toulouse, the largest city in the region. Now, everyone puts pressure on Bertrande to withdraw her charges. The sisters come to her in tears, begging her to save the man they believe to be their brother. The priest tells her that she may be committing a more serious sin by pressing these charges. She may be sending an innocent man to his death. Her son will not speak to her, running from the room when she enters.

Alone and unhappy, Bertrande is left to solve this terrible dilemma. How can she regain the love of her family and still be rid of the impostor? His presence threatens the very power and strength of the Guerre family which was held first by Martin's father and now by Pierre.

At the second trial, new witnesses appear who are confused by the physical likeness of this Martin to their memory of the old one. But the testimony of the family and the servants and the priest convince the judges that this is the real Martin after all. They feel that Bertrande is not quite rational because of her recent childbirth fever, and they announce that the prisoner may go free.

However, before the clerk can sign the document, a new witness appears. He is a soldier, stomping in on a wooden leg. When the family, servants and neighbors see him, they realize that they have been fooled. This is the long-lost Martin.

When Bertrande is brought into court to face him, she falls on the floor at his feet, crying and begging his forgiveness. Martin does not look at her or respond in any way. The judges ask Bertrande's forgiveness for not believing her story, but her husband looks stern.

Finally, he says to her, "Dry your tears. They won't help me forget what you have done. The fact that my sisters and uncle were fooled is no excuse for you. You were my wife and should have known better. You deliberately committed this sin. You, and only you, are the cause of my dishonor."

As he speaks, Bertrande sees in his face the look of her father-in-law, the stern patriarch in her life. She sees no hope of forgiveness for herself. As she turns to leave, the other Martin leans forward to ask for mercy. She turns on him saying, "You, sir, gave me no mercy, body or soul."

Bertrande walks from the courtroom alone.

Court records show that Arnold du Tilh was hanged in front of Martin Guerre's home on September 12, 1560. There are no records to tell us what became of Bertrande or Martin Guerre.

THE WIFE OF MARTIN GUERRE*

PART 1

A wedding! For days the village of Artigues had waited with great happiness for the union of two rich peasant households, both of which were as ancient and proud as any landlord's. Eleven-year-old Bertrande de Rols and Martin Guerre, only a little older, betrothed since they were infants, were to be wed on this day in January 1539.

The fact that they had never seen each other before the day of their wedding was not important. What did matter was that their marriage would settle a long-standing feud between the two families caused when one great-grandfather had insulted the other great-grandfather more than thirty years before. What mattered most of all was that the marriage would bring greater prosperity to both families through the combining of some of their lands.

Bertrande felt and saw throughout the entire day this order of importance. Except for the wedding ceremony itself, she felt quite left out. The great feast at the house of her new in-laws was chiefly an occasion for merrymaking and congratulations for her parents and those of her new husband.

Sitting next to her mother at the table, but largely neglected, Bertrande finally slipped away to explore the house. Noting the large canopied and curtained beds and huge fireplace in the main room, Bertrande opened a door and walked cautiously down a dark hallway. At the other end, her new husband was opening a shutter. Hearing her footsteps, he turned toward her. His long, young face bore a fearsome expression. He disliked being married like this, and that, combined with his already strong feelings of superiority toward his new wife, led him to attack her without a

*From *The Wife of Martin Guerre*, by Janet Lewis.

word giving her a severe boxing on the ears. Bertrande's cries brought her aunt who separated them and without a word of reproach to Martin led both children back to the main room.

After the feasting, the two children were dressed in night clothes and put in the same bed in the presence of all the guests. After much laughter and joking about what might happen if the children were a few years older, the adults finally left the children alone.

The last to leave was Martin Guerre's father, also named Martin, who wished the children goodnight. His strong, serious face, its expression exaggerated by the flickering torchlight, conveyed to the young girl a sudden realization that now her entire life lay beneath his absolute jurisdiction and the secondary jurisdiction of the boy next to her. To her relief, the young Martin merely declared himself tired and went to sleep, leaving her alone.

The next day, Bertrande returned to her own family. She stayed there until she was fourteen and of an age when she could better assume her duties as a part of the Guerre household.

One day, a kindly housekeeper from the Guerre farm came to conduct Bertrande away from all the familiar sights and sounds of her childhood into her new role as the wife of Martin Guerre. Her new life carried special responsibilities because her husband was the sole son and heir to the wealth and traditions of generations of this feudal peasant family.

Bertrande's new mother-in-law showed her more kindness and attention than she would again for a long time. After a leisurely tour of the buildings and grounds of the farm, Bertrande was given the task of grinding meal in a mortar. Her mother-in-law told her many things so that the young wife might begin to understand the household she would one day be called on to direct.

That evening, the men began returning from the fields. The animals were driven into pens and stables to protect them from the wolves. One by one the men assembled in the main room of the house, joined at the last by Martin's father and the young Martin. Without a smile, but in a somewhat kindly voice, the old master summoned Bertrande to him, saying, "Sit here, my

daughter," indicating a place next to him. "Tonight you shall be waited on. Tomorrow you shall have your own share of the labors of the house."

When his attention was elsewhere, Bertrande stole timid, sidelong glances at the stern, calm face. She realized that he was stern and calm in the assurance of his absolute authority. In him resided the authority of the patriarch, vigilantly surveying his household domain just as a king might survey his kingdom. From the old master flowed both authority and security for the ordering of all things. To the young Bertrande it seemed that his iron presence guaranteed the order of the household, the order of Artigues, and the order of the entire world. Her place would be to assure the household continuity by contributing her labor to the general good, and by bearing her husband an heir. Thus, a few years later when she gave birth to a son, her esteem in the household rose considerably, and daily both mother and son grew in strength. The new generation of the house of Guerre was assured.

Bertrande's husband, too, was serving an apprenticeship for his future role as head and patriarch. His temperament seemed suited to the task. Silent, headstrong and stern, he was as much like his father as a son could be. Yet these qualities led to the clash with his father which led to Bertrande's complete tragedy.

By law Martin remained a minor until his father's death, subordinate to him in every respect. Just as a vassal owed allegiance to his lord until death, so Martin owed allegiance to his father. This was so, so that when Martin himself came into his role as household head, he, too, could insure the ordering of the household realm. Bertrande observed Martin's obedience to this order and also understood his impatience. Once, when Martin had gone bear hunting without his father's permission, his father had punished him with a blow so hard it had broken two teeth. No one interceded for him or protested the harshness of the punishment. Even Martin's mother had said, "You understand, my son, it is necessary. If you have no obedience for your father, your son will have none for you, and then what will become of

the family? Ruin. Despair." Even Martin had said simply, "Yes, I understand." Only later, in private, had Bertrande sympathized with Martin.

Then, one autumn day, Martin took Bertrande aside and announced he was leaving. Bertrande started, but controlled herself as Martin explained he had once again broken with his father's authority. He had taken seed grain to plant a new field without his father's permission. To escape the inevitable punishment, Martin would go down into the lowlands. He thought that once his father saw that what he had done was for the good of the household, the old master would forgive the breach of authority.

Although sympathizing with him, Bertrande, in a sudden premonition of disaster, clung to his arm and begged him not to go. But Martin reassured her he would be away only a week or two. Because he seemed anxious to go, Bertrande released his arm after a last caress. Before he slipped into the forest shadows he turned and waved with a free and elated gesture.

Martin's absence lengthened beyond the few weeks. At first Bertrande did not want him to come home. The old master would forgive neither Martin's disobedience nor his absence from his inheritance. His [father's] displeasure remained unmoved even as the weeks stretched into months and the months into years. He remained unmoved even until his sudden death in a riding accident only a few months after his wife had died from illness. Thus, suddenly, Bertrande was thrust into the role of household director while good Uncle Pierre assumed the role of household head.

Without Martin or the old master, the mood grew solemn and grim. Bertrande gave Martin a year to hear of his father's death and return to his inheritance. When he did not, she at last had to admit that Martin had either abandoned her or was dead. There was no choice for her but to continue her life directing the affairs of the house and raising her son as best she could. Gradually, Bertrande came to accept her state that was so like widowhood but which always contained the sad, yet tantalizing, hope that one day the young master would return and life would become whole once again.

THE WIFE OF MARTIN GUERRE

PART 2

One day, Bertrande was instructing her son in the catechism. As she made him repeat the words, her mind wandered to the memory of her husband, who had now been gone eight years. His memory, much to her dismay, was becoming thin and faint. Sanxi, her son, looked up at his mother, waiting for the next question. She began to speak when a commotion burst out in the courtyard.

Uncle Pierre, without even knocking, threw open the door to the room exclaiming, "He has come home! Here is your husband Martin!" Bertrande rose from the chair, clutching her hands to her heart, as a bearded man in soldier's garb came to the door. It was he . . . or was it? A man stood before her, a little shorter and huskier than she remembered. But he looked like Martin. In her surprise, all her pent-up emotions poured out. Bertrande cried, "Ah, why have you been away so long! Cruel! Cruel! Even your voice sounds strange!" The man looked in silent admiration and surprise at the beautiful woman before him.

Uncle Pierre broke in, "This is no way to greet your husband, with reproaches. My nephew, you must forgive her." "No Uncle," replied the stranger who was Bertrande's husband. "She is right. It is I, who left you unprotected for so long, who should ask pardon of her." His reply left Bertrande deeply moved and a little surprised. Uncle Pierre beamed, "Ah, you have grown in spirit as well as body while you were away. It was spoken like a true father and head of the house."

In the strangeness of the first few days, doubts and confusion assailed Bertrande. She wanted to believe this man who won her affection and the esteem and goodwill of the family and village. But he was almost too kind and indulgent, so unlike the old stern, arrogant Martin. As the months passed into the first year, her

love for her husband grew and deepened and would have been perfect except for the nameless fear which sometimes stole over her heart. Had she not had an instinctive warning the night of his return that something was terribly amiss with this man? And yet he brought everyone such happiness. Once, seeing Sanxi and Martin together talking and laughing, she said to herself, "He is too easy with our son. Ah! I am an unhappy woman. If I sin, this happiness is itself punishment."

Bertrande prepared herself for the birth of a second child. As the time drew near for birth, she felt a new and keen awareness of the happy and bustling life around her. The new Martin had a way of noticing the good work of the servants,which made them redouble their efforts. And the shadow of sin which clung to her seemed to enhance the feelings she had. Just as the dreadful crying of a wolf in winter heightened her feelings of security and warmth in the house, so this doubt of the new Martin seemed to enhance her love for him.

Finally, she could hide the truth from herself no longer. After the birth of the child, a son, she finally admitted that she was betrayed and deceived into adultery. Putting aside all denial and doubt, she at last felt relieved and freed from torment, but what could she do? She must be rid of this man, but how? To be silent meant condemnation to a life of sin, but to accuse him of being an impostor would ruin the new-found happiness and harmony of the household. Bertrande did not know where to turn. She felt that perhaps she was mad.

In desperation Bertrande went to the priest, and at confession she said she believed she had committed the sin of adultery with a man who was not the real Martin Guerre. Having laid out her evidence, the priest asked, "Is it, then, for his kindness that you accuse him?" He explained that Martin himself had understood his wife's suspicions and had spoken to him about it. The priest thought that Martin's years away had improved his spirit with kindness and gentleness but had had the opposite effect on his wife's mind, causing her to be a bit unbalanced.

Unable to enlist the aid of the priest, that night Bertrande confronted Martin and asked him to leave her. But Martin refused,

saying, "It would only serve to deepen your madness." After a moment, he also asked, "And how is it that you believe me to be a fake?" Bertrande, her eyes filled with tears replied, "Because the real Martin would, perhaps, have struck me for asking this." The new Martin laughed shortly and then rose with a stern look on his face. "There are others to be considered besides yourself. School yourself, Madame, to the inevitable."

After this, though life appeared to continue as usual, Bertrande grew thin and sickly. She was once again pregnant. Day after day she watched and waited for a break so she could accuse this man openly.

One day Martin, accompanied by the priest and Uncle Pierre, was on the road to the next town when they were accosted by a grimy, disreputable-looking soldier who claimed to be an old war comrade of Martin's. When Martin did not recognize him, the man bent down and pinched Martin's leg below the knee. He stood up with an expression of surprise accusing Martin of being a rogue and an impostor. "The real Martin Guerre lost a leg in battle and now has a wooden one," he said. "I have heard of a man who greatly resembled him. And now I see this is so." Uncle Pierre threatened him, calling him a liar. But the soldier merely shrugged and said, "It makes no difference to me if this man is a rogue. He is your relative, not mine." With that, he walked away.

When Uncle Pierre told Bertrande of the incident, she collapsed on the floor, crying out, "At last, dear God, I am saved!" That night, in a fever she gave birth to a baby which died soon after. The entire family gathered around her door, whispering "She is mad. His long absence drove her mad. Perhaps we should humor her and the fit will pass."

During her recovery, Bertrande refused to see Martin. But as soon as she was able, she sent for Uncle Pierre, whom she still considered the rightful head of the house in the absence of the real Martin. She pleaded her case to him. "I am not mad. Please believe me." Pierre nodded his head. "It is true, at first I did not believe you. But you are Martin's wife and are the one to know." After a silence he said, "Madame, give me your permission to accuse this man of his crime." Bertrande sobbed, "Do as you like, only rid me of his presence."

A few days later, soldiers came from Rieux and took the master of the house away in chains. Sanxi burst into tears as the entire household gathered around to bid Martin farewell. Bertrande stayed inside, standing completely alone before the cold and empty fireplace.

The trial took place at Rieux, where the nearest court met. The sensation of the trial brought a huge crowd of spectators and witnesses. Of these, some testified that the accused was a well-known rogue named Arnaud du Tilh. Others could not decide. Still others declared the man to be Martin Guerre. Finally, the judges concluded that by giving more weight to Bertrande's testimony than anyone else's because she was the wife, the accused was Arnaud du Tilh. They sentenced him to do penance in public and then to be beheaded in front of Martin Guerre's house. Bertrande, aghast at the death sentence, cried out, "No, no. Not death. I have not demanded his death!"

Perhaps, if the matter had ended there, in time everyone would have become reconciled to fate. But Martin's sisters appealed the case to a higher court in Toulouse. During the long interim months, everyone pleaded with Bertrande to withdraw her accusation. Even the kindly, loyal housekeeper who had fetched Bertrande from her parents' house so many years before pleaded

with her. Her kindly old face looked at Bertrande as she said, "I, Madame, would still have you deceived. We were all happy then."

Through it all, however, Uncle Pierre stood by her, and this meant a great deal to her. He still represented to Bertrande the authority of the rightful head of the household.

At the new trial, all was not the same as before. Bertrande was filled with self-doubt. The priest warned her against the even greater sin of causing the death of her own husband, especially since even she was not completely and absolutely convinced that this man might not be her real husband. Her doubt also included the impostor himself. Who was this Arnaud du Tilh? Why did he not return her hatred with hatred? Why had he not run away when she first confronted him? Without her confidence, she did not make a good impression on the judges. Neither did Uncle Pierre, who testified after her.

At last, the judges decided to reverse the decision. The man was, according to this court, the real Martin Guerre. The spectators were murmuring their approval when a commotion broke out at the doorway. The guards pounded the butts of their lances on the floor for order. A soldier appeared in the door, and as he walked toward the judges another sound mingled with that of the lances. It was the sound of a wooden leg. The judges stared at the man in complete amazement. "Body of God," declared one. "This is either Martin Guerre or the devil."

The judges ordered the two men to stand side by side, and the key witnesses were brought in one by one to make their choice. Martin's sisters and other relatives, with many apologies and expressions of sorrow for their mistake, flung themselves on the new Martin, who received them all with a cold reserve. Finally, Bertrande herself was brought in. When at last she lifted her eyes and saw her husband, she uttered a great cry and slowly sank to her knees, reaching out her hands toward her husband. "My dear lord and husband, forgive me and pity me." The tears began to run quietly down her face.

Martin Guerre surveyed his wife coldly for a moment and answered, "Dry your tears, Madame. They cannot, and they ought not, move my pity. The example of the others can be no

excuse for you, Madame, who knew me better than any living soul. Your behavior could only have been willful. You, and only you, are answerable for the dishonor which has befallen me."

Bertrande did not protest. Rising to her feet, she recoiled a step or two in unconscious self-defense from his severe and exact authority. In the silence which followed Martin's unexpected severity, Arnaud's voice spoke gently. "Madame, you came to suspect the change in Martin Guerre, who gave up such sternness to become the most indulgent of all husbands. Do you not marvel that for love of your beauty and grace, the rogue, Arnaud du Tilh, became for three long years an honest man? I had thought to ask you for mercy."

Bertrande recoiled from this new encounter as well. "I marvel that you dare to speak to me. You have deprived me of even the pity of my husband. You had no mercy upon me, either body or soul."

"Then, Madame," came a soft, sad reply, "I can but die by way of atonement."

Bertrande turned from him to her husband, and then, without speaking she slowly walked from the court.

A decree of September 12, 1560, announced that Arnaud du Tilh was hanged before the house of Martin Guerre. Of Martin Guerre and his wife there is no further record, but when hate and love have together exhausted the soul, the body seldom endures for long.

LOOKING FOR CLUES

STUDENT ACTIVITY

If Bertrande's behavior seems strange to you, there are clues in the story which help to explain it. Each of us grows up with a set of rules by which to live. These rules are based on customs—beliefs which we have been taught since childhood. You can discover the rules by which Bertrande lived by looking again at the first fourteen paragraphs of the story. In these paragraphs, feudal rules, which Bertrande obeyed, are described. See how many of these rules or customs you can find. Write them briefly in your own words next to the paragraph number in which you found them.

Paragraph 1 _____

Paragraph 2 _____

Paragraph 3 _____

Paragraph 4 _____

Paragraph 5 _____

Paragraph 6 _____

Paragraph 7 _____

Paragraph 8 _____

Paragraph 9 _____

Paragraph 10 _____

Paragraph 11 _____

Paragraph 12 _____

Paragraph 13 _____

Paragraph 14 _____

WOMEN IN THE ECONOMY OF FEUDAL EUROPE

WOMEN AS PRODUCERS

In spite of their low position in the feudal hierarchy, women were essential as producers in the economy of the feudal period. While they were not generally considered "legal persons," their work in the production of food and clothing was necessary for the survival of their families.

In the *upper classes*, the *noble lady* was the manager of the manor, supervising the work of great numbers of people. In times of war, when her husband was absent, she was responsible for the defense of the castle and manor.

The *peasant wife* bore the greatest share of responsibility for the food and clothing and child care for her family, since her husband was forced to work on the lord's land most of the time.

The peasant man and wife looked upon each other as partners in a struggle for survival. Each needed the other, and they needed many children to help in the struggle. Since there was a high infant mortality, women were encouraged to have more children in order to provide a supply of labor. On the manor, pregnant women had certain privileges. Excused from heavy labor, they could draw rations of bread and firewood in recognition of their condition.

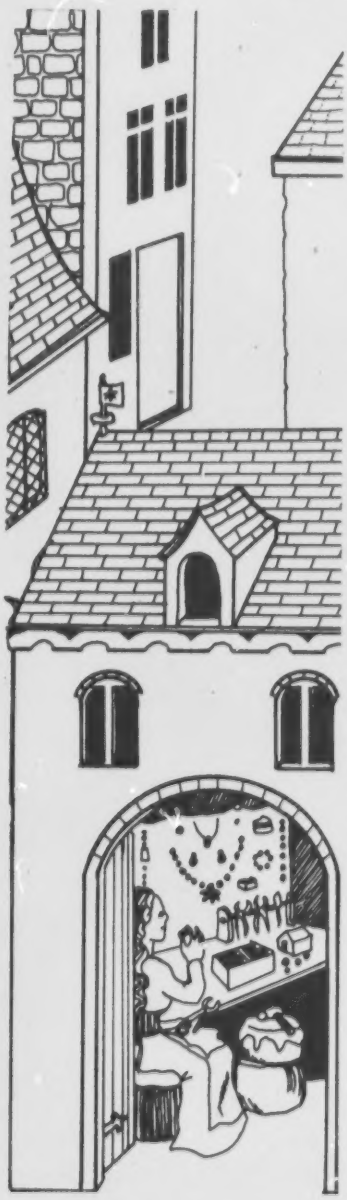
WOMEN IN THE TOWNS

The revival of international trade in the 11th century brought new business to medieval towns. Within the old walled towns little shops were set up to sell every kind of product. People moved into the towns from the countryside to learn new skills and to sell their wares. Records from these old towns show that women played an important part in this busy commercial life. Even then it was necessary for some married women to help support the family and for single women to support themselves. They did not remain at home as housewives. Even if the business was in the home, the household chores were usually performed by young single men and women who were also apprentices in the trade of the household.

Laws were passed which recognized the right of women to have trades independent of their husbands. They were called "femme sole" or single woman laws, and originally were to protect a husband from his wife's debts. But widows and unmarried women also profited by the chance to earn a living as individuals.

Some women carried on more than one trade. These were called "bye industries" and were usually connected with the production of food or drink, brewing, baking, or spinning. However, women were excluded from the regular craft guilds organized by men to protect workers in these trades. Some guilds made rules that no woman could be apprenticed unless she was a wife or daughter of a guild member. Men felt that the lower wages paid to women workers endangered their own income. Only on a husband's death could a widow receive some of the protection and benefits from the guild.

In addition to new skills, the towns gave women the opportunity to learn more about the world from contact with customs and ideas brought in by travelers from faraway lands. The city woman became far more worldly than either the peasant wife or the noble lady on the manor. For example, the shopkeeper had to learn mathematics to keep her books, and a few women became excellent business executives and made fortunes. Sometimes there were schools where even the young girls from the new middle-



class home of artisans and shopkeepers could attend with their brothers. Here they learned to read and write and do basic arithmetic.

Patriarchal control of women, however, persisted in the town as well as in the countryside, as is evidenced by women's exclusion from the guilds. Although the businessmen of the new middle class helped bring about the end of the feudal system, they held on to the old belief in women's inferiority. The values and practices of patriarchy continued to keep women in a secondary role even in a changing world.

WOMEN IN THE ECONOMY OF FEUDAL EUROPE

STUDENT ACTIVITY

1. In what ways were women *producers* in the feudal economy?

   In the country: _____

   _____

   In the cities: _____

   _____

2. In what ways was life for a townswoman different from Bertrande's life on the farm?

   _____

   _____

   _____

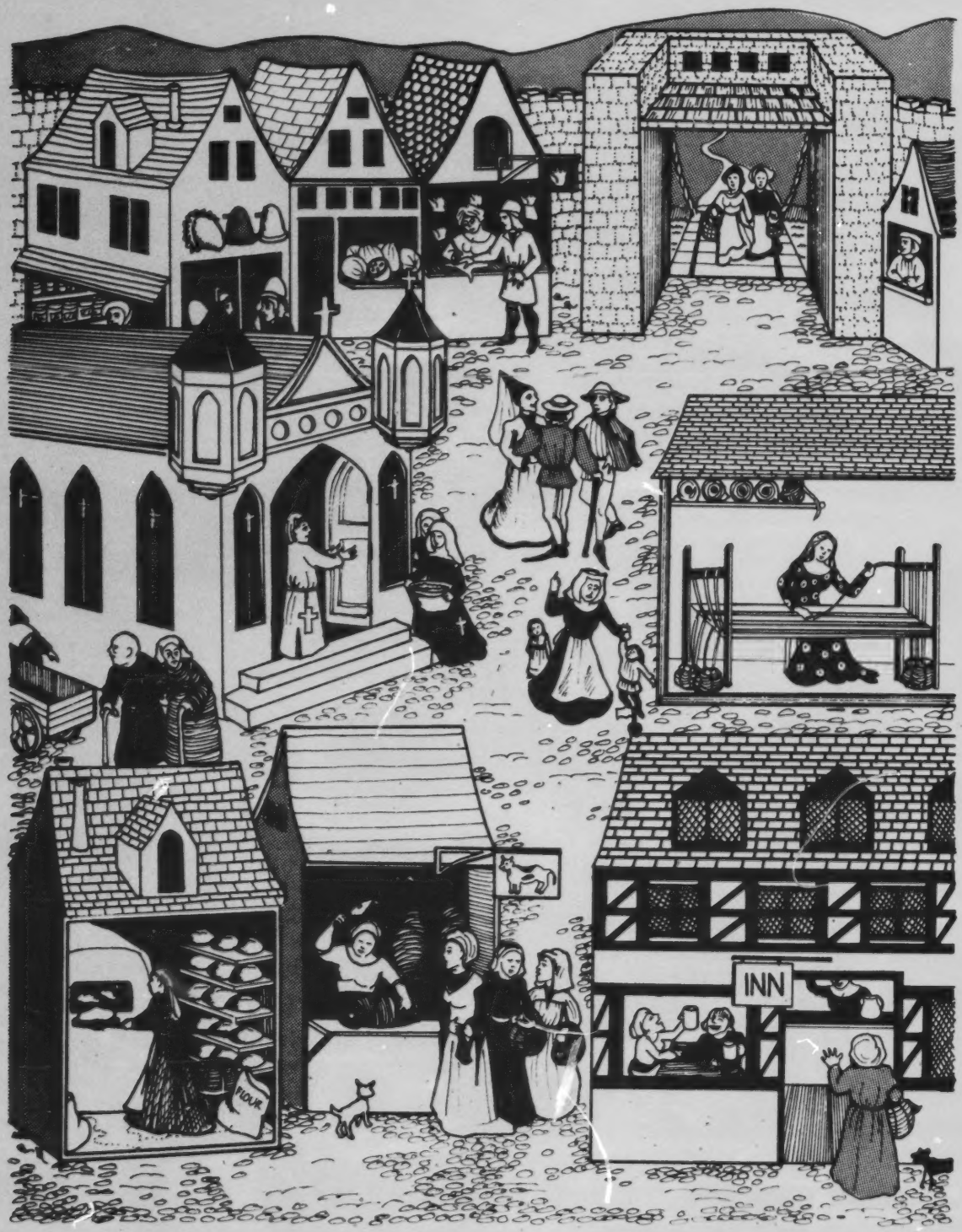
3. What evidence is there that patriarchy still existed even in the towns?

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____



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WOMEN WORKERS IN THE TOWNS OF EUROPE

STUDENT ACTIVITY

Study the illustration carefully.

1. How many different trades do you see women engaged in?

   List as many as you can below:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

2. How does the scene contrast with the description of Bertrande's farm? ("The Wife of Martin Guerre") What are the differences in the physical environment?

_____

_____

_____

3. These names were found on medieval town records. Can you guess what each of these women did for a living? Family names were often obtained through the trade one worked in. Look in the dictionary if you can't figure them all out.

Dolly Brewster _____

Ruth Webster _____

Hannah Smith _____

Mary Spinster _____

Martha Chandler _____

CHRISTINE de PISAN
Author and Champion of Women's Equality

They say no evil is equal to a woman.
But women slay no men, destroy no cities,
do not oppress folk, betray realms, take lands,
poison and set fire, or make false contracts.
They are loving, gentle, charitable, modest, discreet.
Eve sinned, but she was betrayed, and Adam was just as bad.

These are strong words from a lady of the feudal world. But Christine de Pisan was an unusual woman, a woman with an education. Her father, an Italian nobleman, believed in educating his daughter as well as his sons. He permitted Christine to grow up and be educated as a scholar in Venice, where she met many interesting and important people. Her mother disagreed with these ideas. She wanted Christine to learn feminine skills like the other girls. So Christine had to stop her study of science and begin spinning lessons.

However, when her father went to the court of the King of France, young Christine went with him. There she met her future husband, Henry, who was secretary to the king. Christine was less than 15 years old when she married, but she and Henry had a happy life together. Then before she was 25 years old, Henry died, leaving her with little money and three young children to raise. In order to support her children, she turned to the one skill she could count on, writing.

Christine de Pisan may be the first woman of her time who supported herself by her writing. It was not easy in those days for any writer to earn a living. For a woman, it was unheard of. There were no publishers and people had to depend on wealthy people to publish their books. Fortunately, Christine had many rich friends who liked her poems and essays.

What is also remarkable about Christine de Pisan is that she wrote what she believed, even though her ideas were not popular in those days. She wanted *all* women, of every class, to have an education. She said that if little girls were sent to school like boys and taught the same subjects, girls would learn them as well. Indeed, they might understand the arts and sciences better. If they understand less, she said, it is because they do not go out and see so many different places and things, but stay home and mind their own work. She was probably thinking of her own spinning lessons!

In her most famous book, *City of Ladies*, Christine described a society made up of only women. She claimed that peasant women as well as noblewomen have the brains and the skills necessary to build and run a city as well as men.

Unfortunately, most women never learned about Christine de Pisan or her ideas because they could not read. For the lords and ladies who did read her books, you can imagine the arguments that took place! Some, no doubt, felt that this is what came of letting women be educated at all. Others, for the first time, might have given some attention to the strange idea that women might be worth educating after all.

CHRISTINE de PISAN, Champion of Women's Equality

STUDENT ACTIVITY

1. Where would Christine belong on the chart of "Feudal Hierarchy in Western Europe"?

2. How did Christine support herself and her children?

3. What did Christine want for all women?

4. Why did her mother object to her education?

5. List the ways her childhood was different from that of the average girl of feudal times.

6. What was the theme of her most famous book?

7. Can you think of anyone today active in the women's movement who sounds to you like Christine de Pisan?

WOMEN IN THE CHINESE PATRIARCHY

How sad it is to be a woman!
Nothing on earth is held so cheap.
Boys stand leaning at the door
Like Gods fallen out of heaven.
Their hearts brave the Four Oceans,
The wind and dust of a thousand miles.
No one is glad when a girl is born;
By her the family sets no store.

Fu Hsuan

In terms of the conditions of women in Chinese feudalism, the most important writings by Confucius had to do with the systems of obligation and women's place. A woman's place was always in relationship to a man and the class standing of his family. Every woman was obligated to a man in her family, whether father, husband or son. Those of the upper classes could at least enjoy deference from people of the lowest class, the peasantry. But the majority of women in feudal China were the lowest of the low. There was no one who owed anything to or was obligated to a peasant wife or daughter.

WIVES

Confucius maintained that it was a law of nature that women should be held under the domination of men since they were the source of disorder and disruption of the harmony of the community. They needed the guidance and control of men in order to keep them out of mischief. According to Confucian teachings, a woman's entire life should be organized around three obediences:

As a girl, she must obey her father.
As a wife, she must obey her husband.
As a widow, she must obey her son.

The only honorable state for women was marriage and their chief role was as the mothers of male heirs. The worst sin any woman could commit was to fail to produce a boy child. In such a case, she could be returned to her parents and the marriage would be annulled, or her husband would take a second wife in the hope of having a son. If her husband died, she could not remarry. Even if she had been betrothed to her husband as a child and they had never lived together as husband and wife, she was considered a widow and was supposed to live with and serve his parents.

BRIDES

A young unmarried daughter was only a temporary member of the family group, remaining at home only long enough to become of marriageable age or condition. She lost her family name when she left her parents' home. Often the young wife was unable to return to visit her own family after her marriage. She came to her husband's home a stranger, and she remained a stranger until the birth of a child, preferably a male. At this event, she was accorded more respect by her husband's family, but she remained under the domination of her mother-in-law. When any dispute arose between her and her mother-in-law, her husband was supposed to take his mother's side.

For poor Chinese families, marrying off daughters was at once a liability and an asset. The family lost the daughter's services, but usually received some kind of "bride price," in money or goods. The poorest peasants sometimes were forced to sell their daughters as slaves or concubines.

Girls were sometimes married off at an early age to men fifteen or twenty years older than they. On the other hand, a girl might be betrothed or married to an infant or very small child so that she could be a servant in her husband's home for years before he was mature. At the marriage ceremony, the bride was supposed to crawl under a saddle to show her willingness to work like a beast until she died.

As a mother-in-law, the Asian woman enjoyed more power than at any other time in her life.

> *As a compensation for [their] lack of power outside the home [genteel Chinese ladies] came to wield great power inside the home. Theoretically, the men were the heads of the families; but in nearly every Chinese house, the real head was the "Dowager Mother"—the oldest living woman on the male side of the line. Out of respect to her, the men of the family gave in to her wishes, going against her wishes only in moments of extreme seriousness. As for the rest of the family, all the wives, children, and servants were expected to defer to her as a queen.*[1]

Even then, she never achieved a position of economic independence. Although she issued household orders, she was still under the domination of her husband or her eldest son. Even though her labor was essential to the family, she was not economically independent. How she behaved toward her daughters-in-law usually depended on how she had been treated as a bride in the same household. Women waited eagerly for this period and the opportunity to exert some authority. Thus, the system was continued for generations.

FOOT BINDING

The bound feet of the women of China were symbolic of men's distrust of women. It was felt that women must be kept restricted since they might disrupt the harmony of the community.

From the 10th century through the early years of the 20th century, women in the middle and upper classes were expected to bind their feet. Bound feet became a status symbol proving that

[1] *My Revolutionary Years: The Autobiography of Madame Wei Tao-Ming*, Wei Yu-Hsin, Charles Scribner & Sons, 1943. p. 139.

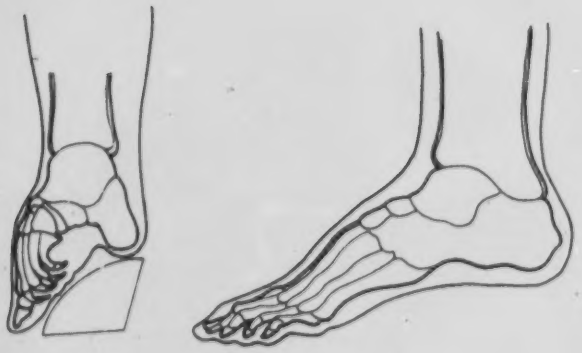
upper-class women had no need to move about, because they had servants to do their work. Lower-class women had their feet bound in hope of marriage into a wealthy family and because it was fashionable.

The origin of the custom is not known, but it was a painful and crippling process. At about five years of age, a little girl's feet were wrapped in yards of cotton cloth so that the four small toes were bent under, toward the sole of the foot.

If the bones did not bend enough by pressure, the bones were broken to force the foot into a pointed shape. This was considered very beautiful by the Chinese male. It was a sex symbol. Men looked at a woman's feet, not at her face, to judge her beauty.

The bound feet crippled her so that she could only hobble around the house. The result of this custom was that women became helpless.

Feet are bound not to make them beautiful as a curved bow,
But to restrain women when they go out of doors.
Old Chinese proverb



LACK OF AN EDUCATION

According to Confucius, woman's virtue lay in a lack of education. Consequently, girls generally did not share with boys in the same opportunities for learning. Peasant girls learned only household skills so that they could make a good marriage. Pan Ch'ao, the most famous woman scholar of China, believed that girls should be educated. The daughter of an eminent scholar, she had been given an extraordinary education. Since there were no books for girls, she wrote one, called *Lessons for Women*. These were rules to help young girls strengthen their character and guide their behavior. Pan Ch'ao was no rebel. Her lessons were based on Confucian teachings, which kept women in the inferior position. She said that all women should try to develop these four virtues:

- **Womanly virtue—know your place, be modest, always be last.**
- Womanly words—do not speak too much or in coarse language.
- Womanly bearing—always appear attractive for your husband.
- Womanly work—do your household chores neatly and quickly.

If a woman followed these rules, she would be a perfect wife and mother. So said Pan Ch'ao. And so said Confucian scholars. There was no question these were the roles every woman was expected to fulfill.

WOMEN IN THE CHINESE PATRIARCHY

STUDENT ACTIVITY

1. Why did Confucius feel that women needed men's control?
2. What were the three obediences?
3. What was the purpose of a woman's life supposed to be according to Confucius?
4. What might happen to her if she failed in this purpose?
5. Why was a young girl not considered a permanent member of her family?
6. At what point in their lives did Asian women have the most power?
7. How are bound feet a symbol of worthlessness?
8. Why didn't girls in China share the same education as boys?
9. Summarize in your own words the four virtues for women from Pan Ch'ao's *Lessons for Women*.
10. What was the purpose of this kind of education for girls?

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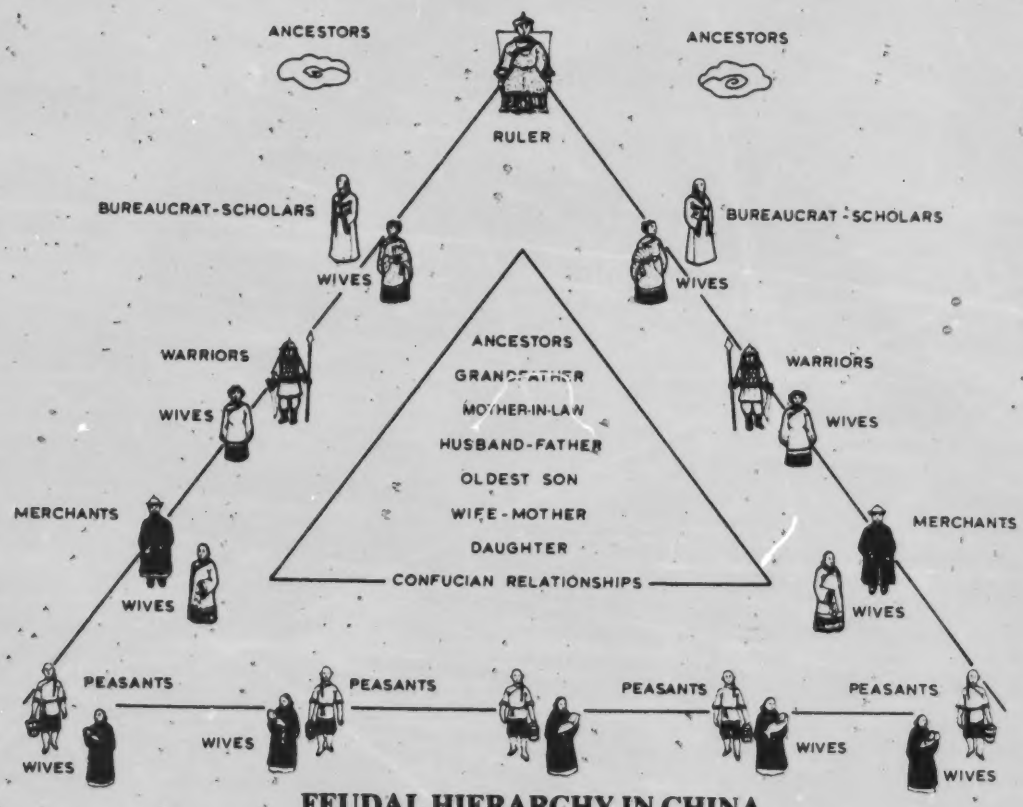


FEUDAL HIERARCHY IN CHINA

FEUDAL HIERARCHY IN CHINA

STUDENT ACTIVITY

1. Who are the people shown on the chart who are respected and worshipped above all others?

2. Who has the greatest authority in the family?

3. Who has the greatest authority in the government?

4. Which group of people does not receive any respect or loyalty from anybody?

5. How can you tell this hierarchy is patriarchal?

6. In each level who are the inferiors?

7. Who has a position of power and respect even though she is a woman?

AH AO*

The young girl peeked out from under the bed. She had been hiding there since early morning. It was hot and stuffy. She could hardly breathe.

Ah Ao could hear her mother moving around in the kitchen. She was serving a feast to the men of the village. There were more than thirty men, some of them from neighboring villages. The men gorged themselves, stuffing food in their mouths and helping themselves time after time from the bowls of wine. The sounds of their noisy eating and drinking filled Ah Ao's heart with misery.

Her mother, Widow Wang, had mortgaged their house[1] to give this dinner. The widow counted on this meal to save her daughter's life. She had spent every cent she could raise to buy food and drink to serve her guests.

*This story was simplified and condensed by *In Search of Our Past* staff. Based on "Ah Ao," by Sun Hsi-Chen, in *Living China*, by Edgar Snow.

[1]The other half of the house had already been mortgaged to provide a proper funeral for her husband.

As they ate, it seemed to Ah Ao that these men were eating the very flesh from her mother's bones and drinking her blood. How would this poor woman survive after the meal was over? Even if her daughter's life was saved, what would become of her? This dinner meant ruin for the widow. She had no plan for survival afterwards. What made her do this?

Widow Wang was sacrificing for a crime her daughter had committed. There was no other way to save the child's life. It took two to commit the crime, but only one had to be punished. By Chinese customs, her daughter could be insulted, beaten or killed. Her lover, a young man from a nearby village, was not considered guilty.

"Eat. Eat!" yelled one fat villager as he pushed a piece of meat into his mouth. "This is a free feed. No return meal has to be given."

"Yea, the more girls like Ah Ao the more free meals!" said another. "I hope we have others like her. Only, why did she choose a man from another village? Why not one of us?"

Widow Wang pretended not to hear this coarse talk. She was waiting to hear what the important men of the village had to say. But, poor Ah Ao heard, and she crawled farther under the bed.

"This is a serious matter," said Wu the Merchant. "The girl has shamed the whole village. The proper punishment for such a crime is death. Remember the Chao girl from Stone Gate Village? She was beaten to death and buried without a coffin. She committed the very same crime!"

"Yes, Widow Wang," said the Village Elder, "this is very serious. It seems to me that you yourself may be responsible. Perhaps you were not virtuous in an earlier life. It's not altogether the girl's fault."

This gave the mother hope, and she spoke up bravely. "Yes, Honored Elder, that is correct. If she did wrong, it was really my fault. I know she deserves to die for this terrible crime, but—please—spare her life!" And the widow broke into tears.

Everyone remained silent. They waited for the elders to answer such a bold request. Ordinarily, the woman would be refused. But they had all eaten at her table. By eating her food, they had given her reason to ask for mercy.

Now, they waited for the opinions of Wu, the Merchant, Chin, the Rich, and the Hairy-headed Elder. Finally Chin gave the verdict.

"It is true that death doesn't begin to cover up the crime. Little is to be gained by taking her life. The guilt has been admitted. Now, Widow Wang asks for mercy for her daughter. She wishes to save her dead husband's face—to wipe the shame from his name. That is possible. However, we cannot allow such a shameful woman to stay in the village. She must go at once."

The Elders agreed. "Let her be gone by dawn tomorrow!"

Now the men got up from the tables and left, their stomachs full, their consciences pure. They had just rid the village of a terrible evil. A young girl has been banished for making love to a man before she was married!

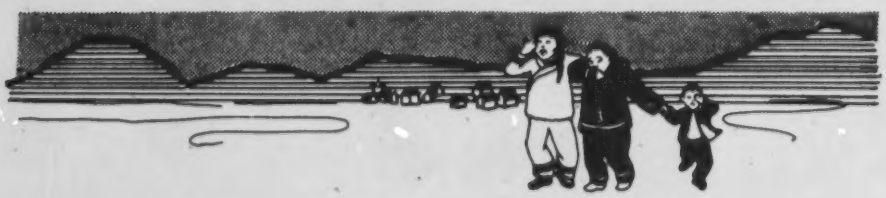
To the girl hiding under the bed, the verdict was almost as harsh as death. How could she live away from her mother and brother? Where would she go? She put her face in her hands and sobbed. Where was her young lover? Why hadn't he come to her defense?

Suddenly she heard the sound of a woman shrieking in a loud voice, "Miserable woman. You shameless mother and immoral daughter! You have seduced my son. He is ruined! My pure, good son who knows the teachings of Confucius." Ah Ao realized that it was her lover's mother.

The woman tried to reach the Widow Wang to attack her. The village women, who had come for their share of the feast now that the men were finished, restrained her. But she allowed herself to be brought inside. Here she ate heartily, even while muttering, "Immoral woman!"

After all the guests had gone, the widow called to her daughter. Ah Ao was so stiff from lying cramped so long that she could hardly stand. Her mother looked at her sadly. "See what you have brought upon yourself. I can do nothing more for you. You must now take care of yourself. Be strong, my daughter." The girl sobbed as her mother gently put her arms around her.

Before the sun was up the next morning, Widow Wang and her son and daughter walked in silence to the edge of the village. The mother kissed Ah Ao goodbye. She stood and watched as her daughter disappeared from sight.



AH AO

STUDENT ACTIVITY

After you finish reading the story "Ah Ao," answer these questions.

1. What incidents in this story show that men have a position of power?

2. What was the "crime" Ah Ao was being punished for?

3. Why were the villagers more concerned about Ah Ao's part in the "crime" than in her lover's participation?

4. Why was this considered a criminal offense?

5. What is meant by "saving her husband's face"?

6. Why did that argument help the Widow Wang get sympathy from the men?

7. How did Widow Wang show strength of character?

8. Where do you think these people belong on the chart "Feudal Hierarchy in China": Ao Ao, Widow Wang, Merchant Wu?

9. Have you heard recently of such extreme punishment for this behavior anywhere in the world?

SPECULATION ON THE FATE OF AH AO

Use the background information in "Women in the Chinese Patriarchy" to support your answers to these questions. Give reasons for your answers.

1. What do you think happened to Ah Ao after she left her village that early morning?

2. What do you think became of Widow Wang after she said good-bye to her daughter?

3. Did Ah Ao, the Widow Wang, or Bertrande Guerre have other choices of behavior?

S-58

CHINESE CHARACTERS TELL A STORY

女 好 妻 安 家 嫁 疾 奉

WOMEN AS WORKERS

Chinese women were dependent for support on their husbands. Most wives spent their entire lives inside the walls of their household, while the men worked outside in the fields or in the village. Very few women worked in the fields with their husbands except in southern China. This was usually seasonal work and done only when absolutely necessary.

It was in the house that women were very productive:

> *Providing meals did not simply mean cooking; it could include the gathering of fuel, the drawing and fetching of water, the husking and grinding or polishing grain, and the preserving of glut vegetables and fruits. The processing of grain was often spoken of by women as the heaviest of their tasks.*[1]

[1] "Women in the Countryside of China," Delia Davin. Paper presented for the Conference of Women in Chinese Society. San Francisco, June, n.d., p. 18.

In some families, the women made bean curd and fermented alcohol drinks, and prepared tobacco leaves for men's pipe smoking. Women also made shoes and clothes, even spinning the thread and making the cloth. Even though this was productive work essential to the survival of the family, women received little recognition for their efforts. Their work was seen as an obligation, and the "fee" they paid for protection.

Many women from poor families had to leave the home to work for money. This was called "going out" and included midwifery, matchmaking, foot binding, domestic work and prostitution. Poor peasants sometimes were forced to sell their daughters as slaves to work in other households or as concubines. In those instances where women did work outside their home, there was usually some acknowledgment from the family of the value of their work. For example, the mother-in-law would cook, care for the children, and do the chores usually only done by younger women.

Upper-class women rarely left their homes. They had servants to shop for food and to run errands for them. Many of these women longed to go visiting or even stand in a doorway and observe their neighbors. But standing in the doorway was forbidden for proper ladies.

Although most of these women had servants, they had the responsibility of managing the household. In this respect, they had a great deal of power as they became mothers-in-law. As their sons brought wives to live in the house, they could supervise their daughters-in-law. Even the men in the family respected the "Dowager Mother," as the oldest woman in the house was called.

WOMEN AS WORKERS

STUDENT ACTIVITY

1. List several ways women in China were *producers.*

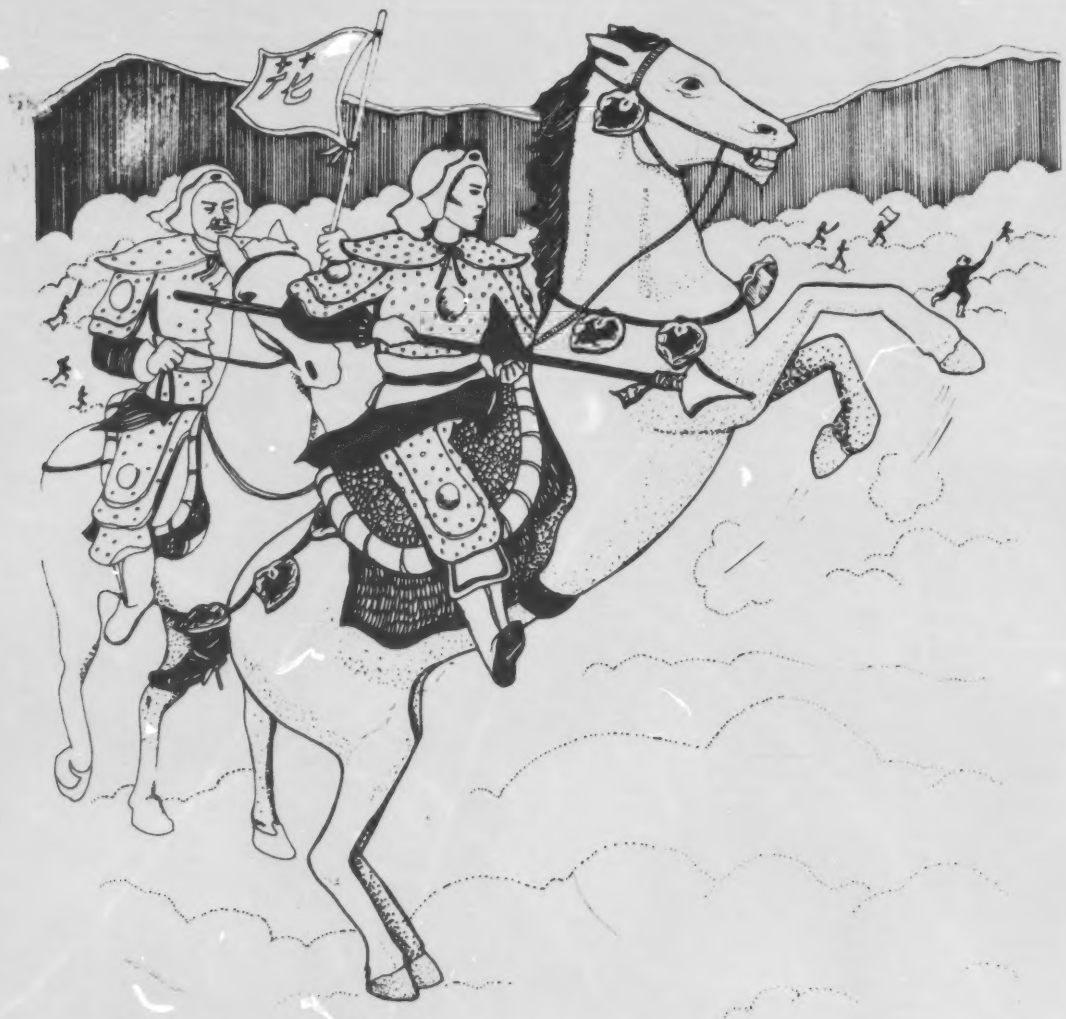
2. Where did the productive work of most women take place?

3. What were the jobs some women had outside of the house?

4. Which jobs for women were the poorest in terms of respect from the community?

5. What was the most powerful position a woman could ever achieve in the family hierarchy?

6. Why do you think women were forbidden to stand in the doorway?



HUA MU LAN
THE WARRIOR WOMAN

In this legend of old China, the real-life heroine, Hua Mu Lan, represents the idealized woman who heroically overcomes difficulties through her own resourcefulness and skill. Although women were oppressed by the patriarchal society, they were expected to respond to crisis situations with intelligence and courage. They were not looked upon by society in general as helpless, but were expected to join their men as warriors in defense of family and land.

Although Hua Mu Lan's behavior was nontraditional, the fact that she was acting in her father's behalf makes her a popular figure. Her skill at martial arts was not as unusual as it might seem. Because a girl's life with her own family was of such short duration, upper-class fathers sometimes indulged their daughters by allowing them to participate in the same educational process as their sons. Hua Mu Lan must have enjoyed such a privilege, since she was skilled not only in the traditional female arts but also in the martial arts.

Hua's father was an officer in the army during the Wei dynasty, 385-535 A.D. So from the time she was a child she learned all the fighting skills. She got to be very good. One day when she was sitting at home weaving, like all girls did then, a messenger came from the Emperor commanding her father to raise an army to fight bandits.

At that time there was a lot of trouble with the Nomadic tribes on the Northern Border. But her father had spent all his life on the battlefield. He was then very old and sick and could not possibly go to war again. In old China when someone was called to fight and could not go, he could find someone else to go for him. But the only son in the family was Hua's little brother, and he was too young. The family was worried and did not know what to do.

Hua decided she would go into the army for her father, but her parents would not give her permission. So she secretly changed clothes and put on her father's army uniform, and came to the front gate.

Her father saw a young, handsome officer, and thought it was someone from the village who had also been drafted. He never guessed that it was his own daughter. Then Hua took off her helmet and her hair fell down and he recognized her. So then her parents gave her permission to go. Hua was then 17 years old.

Hua Mu Lan fought on the border for 12 years. Because she was very brave and skillful, she was made a general. She was very popular and well liked by the soldiers. But no one knew that she was a girl.

At the end of 12 years of fighting the trouble was almost over. There was peace with the tribes again. Because Hua was such a good general, the Emperor wanted her to stay in the army and fight someplace else. But Hua said she must go home to take care of her old parents, so she could not accept. The Emperor rewarded her with many presents and commanded the other officers from that army to take her home in honor.

When she got home she changed into her girl's clothes again. No one recognized her. None of her friends from the army could believe that this pretty woman was the same brave general who had fought like a tiger beside them for 12 years. Later, she married one of her "fellow soldiers" from the army.

HUA MU LAN
THE WARRIOR WOMAN

STUDENT ACTIVITY

1. How did Hua Mu Lan's education differ from that of most Chinese girls?

2. What did she do that all girls did?

3. Why didn't Hua's brother go to the army in her father's place?

4. What kind of relationship must have existed between Hua and her parents? Was this something that the average girl in the average Chinese family could do? Explain why Hua was able to accomplish this feat.

5. Study the illustration. What elements of patriarchal custom can you find there?

6. Do you think it will ever be possible for women to lead armies as women, rather than disguised as men?

LETTER TO A DAUGHTER IN FEUDAL EUROPE*

Girls learned very early in life what was expected of them. They heard conversations among the women of the household. They were taught by the priest to fear the eternal damnation which would result from sin. Young women were given very specific rules about their behavior as wives. Here is a mother's farewell letter to her daughter on the eve of her marriage.

My Dearest Daughter,

I beg you not to be upset because I have given you in marriage. Your husband might be angry if you show your sorrow. Our family honor demands that you should be married and have children.

Now you must go from the rule of your father to the rule of your husband, thy lord, to whom you owe companionship, service and obedience. Here is some advice for you.

— Avoid doing or saying things which make him angry. If he is in a cross mood, do not joke with him. Leave him until he feels better.

— Learn what he likes to eat and serve it. If you do not like that kind of food, pretend that you do, because a wife should conform to the tastes of her husband.

—Be very careful with his money and his possessions. Do not lend his things or be wasteful.

—Keep all the secrets of your husband. Do not talk to others about what goes on in your house.

* *Women of Florence, Isidoro Del Lungo,* Translated by Mary C. Steegmann, pub. by Chatto and Windus, London MCMVII, 1907.

—Keep yourself neat and clean and attractive, but do not use a lot of makeup or jewelry because your husband might be suspicious of your intentions.

—Do not be a gadabout. It is the woman's duty to attend to the affairs of the family and the household. The man must go out a great deal in order to conduct his business. It is better to talk very little, and thus be considered very wise.

—The most important commandment *is do not do anything in deeds or words to make your husband jealous. Show him all honor and reverence, whatever may happen. Whenever he returns home, always give him a kindly reception, and treat his relatives better than you treat your own.*

Then, the gentle mother blessed her loving daughter and made the sign of Holy Cross upon her, saying, "And if you do all these things, you will be your husband's crown of gold."

LETTER FROM A CHINESE MOTHER*

The following is an imaginary letter based on the feudal codes for women of China. It is written by a mother to her daughter who is being married. It is filled with what was then considered "good" advice.

Dear Daughter,

Soon, you will begin the second stage of life for women. You will pass from the authority of your father to that of your new lord, your husband. As we have taught you to be obedient to your father, so you must now be obedient to your husband. Never contradict his orders. He must be like heaven to you.

You must remember to be gentle and obedient, faithful and quiet. Your new parents-in-law will now replace your own parents. Respect them and gradually they may come to accept you. You must win their respect through hard work and obedience to the correct conduct for women, especially for new daughters-in-law. You should get up early before everyone and go to bed late at night after everyone. Doing manual labor with a good will without thought to difficulty will help mold your

*Written by *In Search of Our Past* staff. Based on accounts from this period as cited in the bibliography for this unit.

character. Above all, do these things without thinking of attracting attention. Be modest in all conduct.

I hope you will soon give birth to a baby boy. Then, your importance to your husband and his parents will be assured. You will have been given a place in the lineage of their family. Then, when you are old, you will become the mother-in-law to his wife, and your old age will be filled with the duties of the third stage of woman's life—the obedience to and honor of your eldest son.

I hope you will remember these things. Women are prone to many defects, of which talking too much, jealousy, and disobedience are but a few. Think of the eternal shame on our family and on us, your parents, if you should have to leave your husband's house for such faults. Always be careful in what you do and say. Stay at home as much as possible, and carry out your duties cheerfully. It is said: The way of respect and humility is the first principle of wifehood.

If you follow these paths, your home will be peaceful, and you will live in harmony with your husband.

Your mother

UNIT 2

Women and the Industrial Revolution

WOMEN AND THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION
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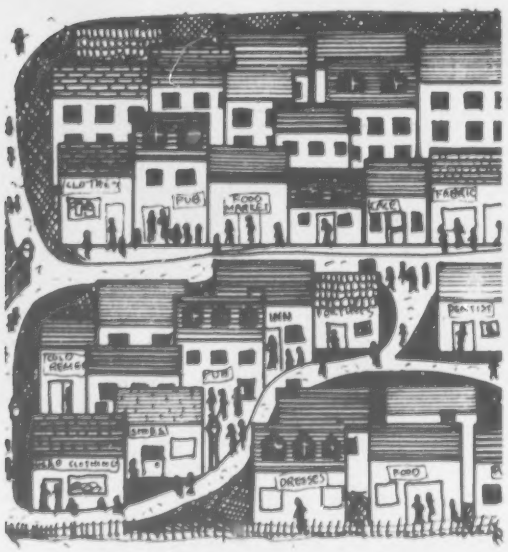
THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION: FACTS YOU NEED TO KNOW

WHAT WAS THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION?

The Industrial Revolution was a complete change in the way everything and everyone were organized to produce things. Before the Industrial Revolution, very few goods were produced. Most people had barely enough to eat and wear. The Industrial Revolution changed this. In a matter of a few generations, the way food and clothing, for example, were grown and made available to people completely changed.

Before the Industrial Revolution, food was grown on individual farms—and only as much as was needed by the individual family. During the Industrial Revolution, machinery was developed and large plots of land were made available, enabling the development of large-scale cash crop agriculture. The main purpose of producing food changed; the purpose became to sell what was grown.



In terms of producing clothing, the change was also dramatic. Before the Industrial Revolution, clothing was made to meet family needs and was produced in the home. The invention of looms during the Industrial Revolution meant that clothing was manufactured on a large scale in factories and was sold throughout the country.

Many other things in society changed. For the first time science and engineering were used systematically in all aspects of life. Important changes also happened in the home with families, in political systems, in laws, and even in marriages.

WHEN DID IT HAPPEN?

The Industrial Revolution is a relatively modern event. Most Industrial Revolutions have occurred between 1600 and the present.

- England's began in the 16th century.
- Japan's began in the 19th century.
- In some countries it is still going on.

WHERE DID IT HAPPEN?

The Industrial Revolution has happened in many countries. We call these countries industrialized. An example is the United States.

It began in Europe, but every continent today has some nations which are in the process of industrialization.

HOW DID IT HAPPEN?

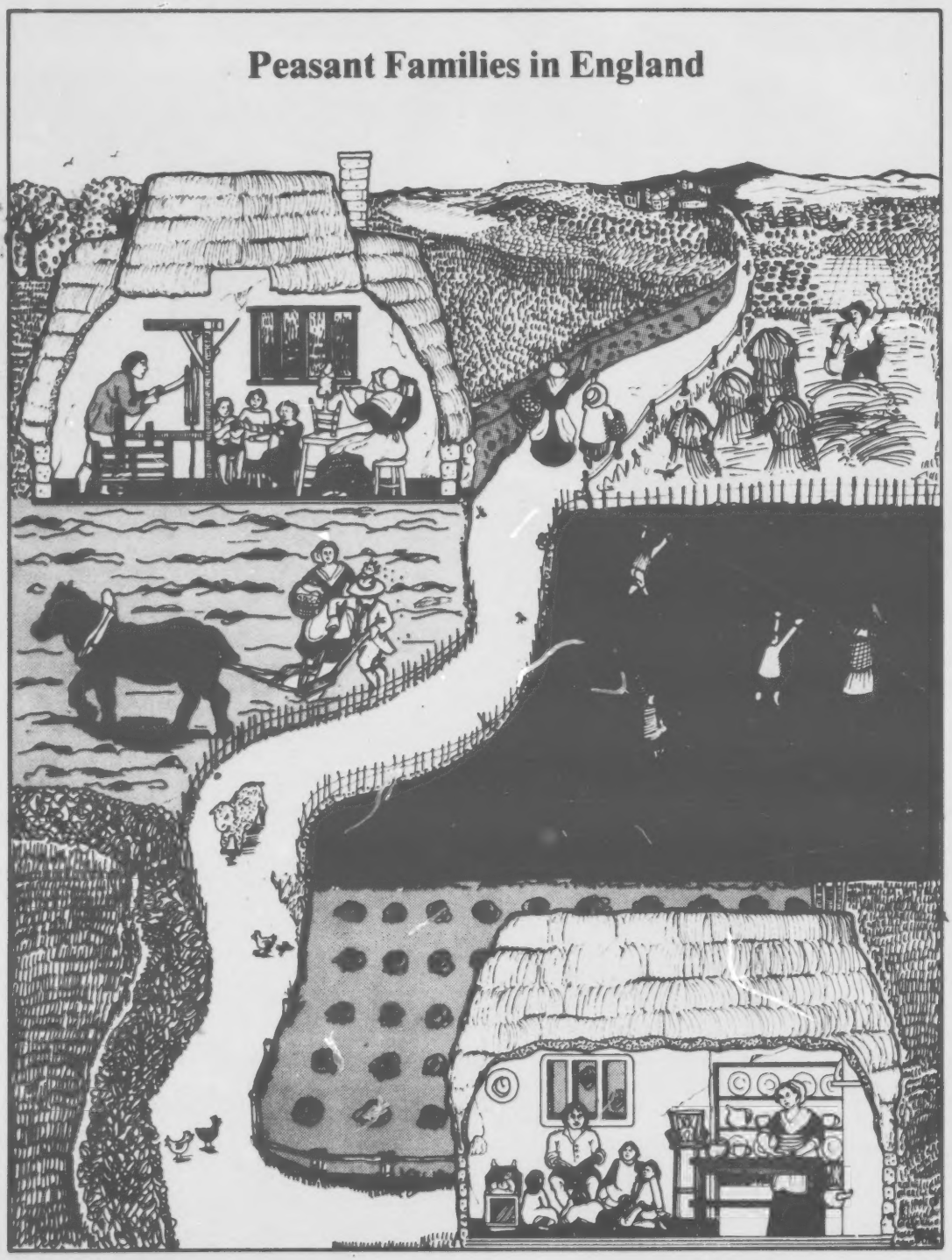
The Industrial Revolutions we will study are the ones that occurred in England and Japan. Both of these societies industrialized in a "capitalist" way. That is, a small number of men with great personal wealth invested their money in the invention of

machinery, the building of factories and mills, and the development of mines, as new and useful methods of increasing their wealth. The result was a complete change in the way goods were produced. Other countries, learning from the experiences of England, Japan and the United States have tried to industrialize in different ways. They have tried to industrialize without exploiting the working class, creating slums or degrading women.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO UNDERSTAND THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION?

- It made possible modern society and a high living standard for more people than before.
- It is a good example of how societies change.
- It created many of the features of society we know today, especially those which relate to women. The family, marriage, stereotypes of women, and even the women's liberation movement are directly related to the changes the Industrial Revolution brought about.

Peasant Families in England



WOMEN BEFORE THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

Before the Industrial Revolution in Europe and Japan, the social-economic system was called "feudalism." Most families lived on the land as agricultural peasants under the domination of the landlord, a religious hierarchy, and a king or emperor. Some people lived in towns and cities, but feudal towns were quite small, functioning mainly as trading centers. The peasant household was usually made up of the family (mother, father, children and grandparents) but sometimes it included servants and hired hands. The servants were mostly very young, unmarried men and women who were learning household skills so that they might have a household of their own one day. They did many necessary chores, including housecleaning and child care, while wives did other work.

In feudal times, women were considered inferior to men. A husband was considered the main provider and protector of the household—a lord of his house. A man could beat his wife as a way of expressing his authority. A wife had almost no legal grounds for divorce. Once she married she was considered part of her husband's household and could not leave without his consent. Girls were often married in their early teens. These marriages were arranged by their parents without the girls' consent.

In spite of this, women before the Industrial Revolution in many ways were more important to their husbands and families than women in more modern times. This is because much of their work in the household was critical to the survival and economic well-being of all its members. Even some tasks we consider "house chores" today were much more important in feudal times. Cooking and sewing, for instance, were the final stage of work on things produced by household members. Today, they are the finishing touches provided on consumer goods bought by wages earned outside the home. In other words, in feudal times, women were primarily producers of goods rather than the consumers of goods they have become.

The peasant household lived mostly on the food and other goods and services produced by its members. This method of production is called "domestic economy." In those times there was no idea that the husband went out of the household to work for wages in order to support a wife and children who simply stayed at home. The wife in the domestic economy oversaw and did much of the food and clothing production, selling the surplus for cash income.

Women also worked alongside their husbands in heavy manual labor whenever needed. In recognition of their importance in Japan, peasant housewives were granted a special place on the hearth during the evening called the "kakuza." It was a place of honor.

Children also took part in economically productive work. From the time they were three and four years old, children were assigned tasks according to age. Such tasks ranged from shooing birds and animals away from the crops to winding thread as it was spun to helping out with the many other chores around the household. In Japan, for instance, children tied paper sleeves over ripening peaches to prevent insect and sun damage, or they fished in irrigation canals to supply food for the household diet.

The husband had many duties related to the maintenance and functioning of the household. He was expected to provide protection and labor to the landlord. This meant that much of the time he either worked the landlord's land, so that his wife and servants could work their own plot, or he served in the lord's armed forces in the constant wars and disputes between landlords.

At home, the husband shared in household duties. For instance, since some peasants in England could read and write, he was expected to share in the education and religious training of his children with his wife. He taught young servants how to read and write. Just as his wife was expected to help with manual labor during busy times in the fields, the husband also helped in the household chores at busy times. He also hunted food for the family, and oversaw the sheep and herds of livestock.

In the cities and towns women also played an important role. Smaller crafts and trades were often conducted from shops attached to the home. Since the workshop was in the home, the wife and daughters were expected to help out, so they often knew the craft or trade well. In some places, women members were accepted into the guilds of such various crafts as shoemaking, iron and metal working, and printing. A widow often took over a workshop after her husband's death and was given the same legal status as her husband, thus being able to conduct money matters and carry on the trade.

All this meant that *before the Industrial Revolution, the wife and children were equally as important as the husband in the economic activity of home and society.* Although women and children were considered inferior to men, the wife was not dependent completely on her husband for support. And the man did not look down on household work as inferior to his earning a

living outside the home. In many ways, husband and wife had to work together as partners. Cooking, cleaning the house, and child care were not chores only for women. And "making a living" was not the only role for men. As we shall see, this new ideal was brought into being by the Industrial Revolution.

WOMEN BEFORE THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

STUDENT ACTIVITY

How well did you read?

1. How were *women* important to the family?

2. What is "domestic economy?"

3. Who were the servants? What did they do?

4. In what ways were husband and wife like partners? In what ways is it different today?

5. What was women's status in the crafts and trades in the towns?

6. What is the difference between a producer and a consumer? How would being one or the other influence the status of women?

7. In what ways was women's status different in pre-Industrial times from their status now? In what ways is it the same?

PEASANT FAMILIES IN ENGLAND BEFORE THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

STUDENT ACTIVITY

Look at the illustration of a typical English country household before the Industrial Revolution.

1. List the different work tasks of each member of the household in pre-industrial times.

   Mother **Father** **Children**

2. List the needs of the family that are met by these activities.

3. List some extra products which might be taken to market to be sold for cash.

4. List some things they might buy at the market for their own use.

THE CHANGING TASKS OF FAMILY MEMBERS

Oral Histories

STUDENT ACTIVITY

Before the Industrial Revolution most families produced or made at home the things they needed— for example, food, clothes, tools, utensils, and toys. In industrialized nations, most families are consumers, which means they buy what they need. Their money for these products is earned from work they do outside of the home.

Thus, one of the most important changes brought about by the Industrial Revolution was to move economically productive work to *outside* the home. As this change took place, there were noticeable changes in the chores and tasks family members did at home.

This assignment is to help you learn about some of these changes which may have happened even in the past two or three generations of American families.

A. Ask your parents and grandparents:

1. When you were my age, what chores were you expected to do at home?

   Mother Grandmother Father Grandfather

2. Did you make any extra money outside of the house? How?

   Mother Grandmother Father Grandfather

3. When you were my age, did your family produce any of the things they used? What?

   Parents:

   Grandparents:

B. Ask yourself:

1. What chores are *you* expected to do at home?

2. List the ways *you* have earned money *outside* of the home:

3. Does your family *produce* any of the things it uses? What are they?

ORAL INTERVIEW

STUDENT ACTIVITY

Directions

1. Make a date in advance with the person you want to interview. In making this contact be sure to explain the purpose of the interview and the topics you wish to cover.

2. Allow at least 30 minutes for the interview.

3. Begin the interview by explaining again the purpose of the interview and the topics you wish to cover. Be sure the interviewee consents to be interviewed.

4. Ask only one question at a time. Avoid questions which lead to yes-or-no answers. If you do get yes-or-no responses, then ask for an explanation. "Could you explain a little more, please?" Or, "Why did you feel that way?"

5. Take your notes on a separate page.

6. Be patient. Remember, most people have never been interviewed. It is an unusual experience. A person must have time to think about her or his answer. If you act as if you are in a hurry, the other person won't feel that her or his answers are important to you.

THE FIRST STAGE OF THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION WAS AN AGRICULTURAL REVOLUTION: Facts You Need to Know

•Before the Industrial Revolution, agricultural land use was very inefficient. The majority of people were peasants who lived on the edge of extreme poverty. Lack of agricultural science, inefficient tools, and low yield crops meant the land produced just enough to keep things going, but no surplus.

•The first step in the Industrial Revolution was a complete change in land use so large areas of land could be used with better tools (including mechanization), new kinds of higher yield crops, and more scientific use of fertilizers to produce a commercially profitable surplus of crops.

•With better use of land, such large numbers of peasants were no longer nceded. These peasants were forced to become day laborers at the new agricultural units or the new industrial work force in the cities.

•These changes meant far-reaching changes for women.

THE AGRICULTURAL REVOLUTION IN ENGLAND

•Before industrialization, much feudal land was used collectively by serfs, yeomen, and landlords alike. This land was called the *commons*. The peasants, called "yeomen" in England, used the commons to raise their own food, cut wood, grow the raw materials for clothing such as flax for linen, or raise sheep.

• From the 16th to 19th centuries, many landlords put fences around this common land and drove the peasants off. They did this by having Parliament pass Enclosure Acts. Since landowners were the only ones who could vote or hold office, Parliament always passed the Enclosure Acts as requested.

•The result was that large numbers of peasants were put off the land and their homes destroyed. Large numbers of unemployed people began roaming England looking for work, sometimes resorting to stealing just to stay alive. Some of these people became day laborers working for a few pennies a day for the landowners. Others became wage laborers working in the new mines and factories.

In 1820, the Dutchess of Sutherland enclosed 800,000 acres of land. She put 150,000 people off that land. She put 130,000 sheep to graze on the land. She then rented to each family 2 acres of sub-marginal land.*

*sub-marginal means unfit for cultivation.

THE AGRICULTURAL REVOLUTION IN JAPAN

•Before industrialization most peasants in Japan gave the majority of their year's crops to the landlord. They were "tenants" on the landlord's land. Even when weather caused a bad crop, they were forced to give a set amount to the landlord. If they didn't have enough, they had to owe it on the next year's crop. This often left them deep in debt.

•In 1868 anti-feudal groups managed to overthrow the feudal order and establish a new government through a revolution called the Meiji Restoration. The Meiji government acted to abolish feudalism by passing a land reform act. The government gave the old landlords public bonds to pay for land which was then given to peasants.

•Most peasants who received land were too poor to buy seeds, fertilizer, oxen and tools. So, they had to borrow money. Often, they borrowed money from their old landlord, going into debt again. When they could not pay back the loans, many farmers sent their young sons and daughters off the land to look for work.

•This resulted in many young people leaving the land and working in factories and mines. Some of these people left Japan to look for work in other countries, including the United States.

THE RESULTS OF THE AGRICULTURAL REVOLUTION

•Land use became more efficient.

•Large numbers of peasants were driven off the land and into the cities looking for work.

CHANGES FOR WOMEN

•Since work moved out of the individual peasant household and into factories and mines, women lost their status as economic partners with their husbands.

•Married women with children whose husbands went to work in the cities were the most discriminated against because it was thought that their husbands should support them. These women had to find work as day laborers or stay with relatives just to find a way to live.

•Other women, especially younger ones, were forced to become prostitutes since they could not make a living any other way.

•The majority of women, however, could find no work and were left as housewives at home with the children. They became dependent on their husbands for everything.

•Most women who went to work found jobs in textile mills, mines and domestic service.

•Working women's wages were always lower than men's, sometimes being only one-third of men's wages for the same work.

THE CREATION OF THE WORKING-CLASS WOMAN

STUDENT ACTIVITY

1. Describe the status of the woman before the Industrial Revolution.

2. What happened to the peasant at the beginning of the Industrial Revolution? How did this happen?

3. How did the Industrial Revolution change the status of the woman?

4. How did the Industrial Revolution affect the peasants as a whole? Where did they go? What did they do?

WORKING-CLASS WOMEN
Facts You Need to Know

•The period of industrialization led to the breakup of the family, with the members going to different places just to try to make a living.

•Soon after the Industrial Revolution began in England and Japan, 75-80% of the population had become working class.

•Wages for working-class men were so low that many working-class women had to find work just to make sure they could eat.

•Women with young children often left them alone or with neighbors or older children. Young babies were often fed alcohol or even opium to keep them quiet until their mothers could return from a 14- to 16-hour work day to feed them. This led to many working-class people being called "dull."

•Girls from the ages of 4 or 5 began to work.

•In both England and Japan, the main jobs for women and girls were in mines, textile factories and domestic service.

•In England more women worked in domestic service than in all other jobs combined.

•Servants suffered some of the worst conditions because of forced isolation from friends, family and other workers, and because of lack of government protection.

•In Japan, the majority of young women worked in textile factories. These women workers made up the majority of all Japanese factory workers until the 1920's.

•Wages and working conditions for women in both countries were terrible. The workday was 14-16 hours, six or even seven days a week. Wages were only a few cents a day.

THERE WAS NO PLACE ELSE TO GO: A GIRL IN THE MINES*

INTRODUCTION

During the early years of the Industrial Revolution in England, women and children worked alongside men in the coal mines. Their jobs, however, were not always the same. For example, men usually dug out the coal and the women and children hauled it to the surface any way they could.

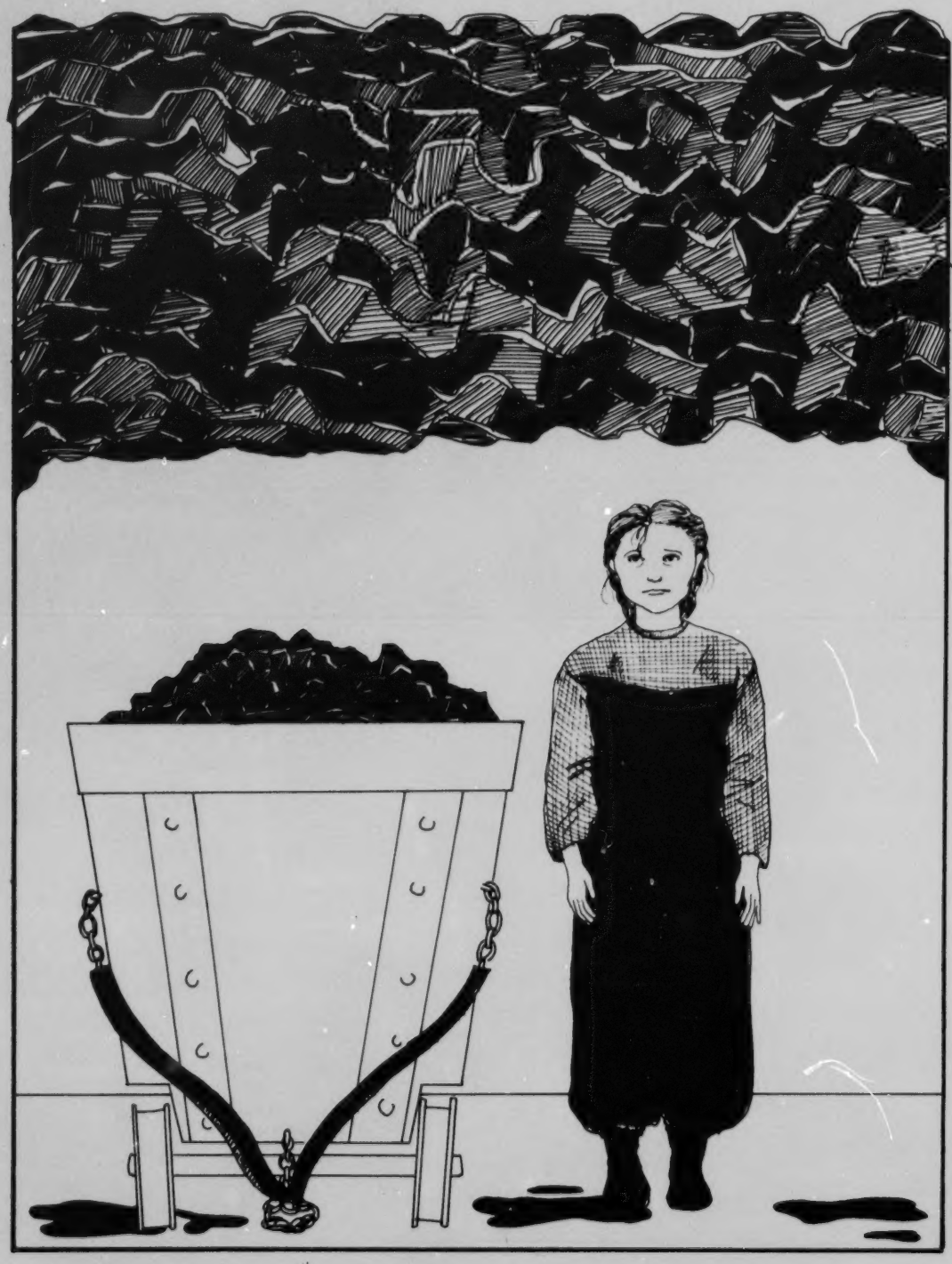
Men and women received different pay. Often men received the paycheck for the whole family so that many women never saw their hard-earned money.

Women who worked in the mines had the extra burden, too, of having to leave their babies with their older children or with a neighbor. When food was scarce, it was often the custom to give the babies rags soaked in gin or laudanam, a form of opium, to chew on. Consequently, babies of the poor were often dull and undernourished.

Work in the mines was very tiring, unhealthy and unsafe. There were no laws before 1842 protecting mineworkers or limiting the age for such work. Children as young as five entered the mines and literally spent their childhood underground.

In this story Ann is lucky. She is 13 years old before she, too, must enter the mines to work. As you read her story, look for the reasons why she had to work and what this work was like.

*Written by In Search of Our Past staff. Based on accounts from this period as cited in the bibliography for this unit.



THERE WAS NO PLACE ELSE TO GO: A GIRL IN THE MINES

A CLOSE CALL

"Watch out! Lookee----!" Janet's warning cry pierced the air.

Ann screamed and threw herself to the side of the narrow tunnel as the wagon full of coal came rushing by.

"Watcha doin'. . . . You'll be dead soon enough without hurrin' it up."

The older girl spoke roughly, but her touch was gentle as she shook Ann as if to arouse her from a stupor.

"Remember, it's your first day here in the pit. . . . It'll take awhile before you can hurry the *corve** that fast."

"Go slowly, 'specially when you're going downhill."

Ann shuddered. She didn't speak, but glanced gratefully at the more experienced girl. She knew how close she had come to a terrible accident. Her own sister had been crushed four years earlier by such a coal wagon out of control.

Ann's mother then had sworn that Ann would never go into the mines. But this last hard winter brought cold and sickness to all the mine families and her father had died of pneumonia. Her mother had struggled to keep the family alive by returning herself to the coal pit. She wanted Ann to continue to go to the school. But Ann was now thirteen years old. It was her turn to help bring in some money for food. It would be lovely if her mother and her brothers could find a small farm, but none was to be had. And there were no places left in the nearby factory. The only place left was to go into the mines.

*corve: a coal cart.

This morning it had seemed an adventure. Getting up at 4:30 a.m. and walking in the dark early hours with her mother seemed exciting, part of a growing-up experience. But, as soon as she saw the mine shaft, that deep dark hole into which they must descend in a little cage run by pulleys, she knew this was frightening—not fun.

She held her breath while the cage descended. . . four long minutes it took to reach the bottom. As she got out of the cage, her feet splashed in water, and she sank into mud up over her ankles. She had worn a pair of her father's wool socks inside her boots and his work trousers, but only because her mother had insisted. She had been so glad that it was dark and nobody could see her in such a ridiculous outfit.

JANET'S STORY

After her close call, Ann and her new friend found a higher, drier spot where they could sit and lean their heads back against the cool veins which showed above them.

"What's your name?" asked Ann shyly.

"Janet . . . Janet Duncan. I've been in the mines since I was 5. I began as a trapper. I used to come in before everyone else, to open and shut the little door which lets in the fresh air to each passageway."

"But, when did you go to school?" asked Ann.

"No school for me. I can't write my own name . . . or read a word."

"Wouldn't you like to go to school?"

"No reason, now. I'm 16 and I'm marryin' soon . . . . I'll have me own babies . . . no need to read or write. My man don't read. Wouldn't be proper for wife to be better learn'd than her man."

Ann was silent. Her own mother couldn't read, but she had wanted her children to read, especially her daughters. She knew that their chances for betterment would be greater if they could read.

Her older sister, Marie, had been a good student, but she wanted pretty clothes. When she turned thirteen, she went to work in the mines even though her parents were against it. Then she was killed only a few months afterward.

WORK

Ann walked down the narrow passageway—about 2½ feet wide and so low she had to stoop to avoid bumping her head on the rough, uneven ceiling. She was glad she wasn't taller, because her back ached already at 10 o'clock in the morning.

She found her corve where it had slammed into another wagon sitting on the tracks. This time she had to push it uphill. She got in back of it, vowing never to get caught in front again, in case the track suddenly dipped downward and she would find herself once more trying to hold back the heavy load of coal. She was a "hurrier" and her job was to move the coal as fast as possible to a place where it could be removed from the wagon and hauled to the top of the shaft. Now she realized that along with speed, she must use caution. If she were not to die like her sister, Marie, under the wheels of a runaway coal car, she must learn to control this cart.

Shaking from fright, she assumed her position in front of the cart and as soon as the track was clear she began to pull it. She wondered how she would have jumped clear if she had been harnessed like so many of the other women she had seen. They wore harnesses of metal and leather across their backs and breasts, with a metal chain which slipped between their legs and was fastened to the corve. How could they avoid being run over by the cart?

It was getting hot in the pit and some of the women were removing their blouses, or letting the top of their dresses fall down over their hips. Ann was embarrassed. She had never seen women undress before. Even her own mother was very modest and disrobed only in the dark, after the candles were blown out. But as she felt the sweat running down her arms and neck and legs, she wished she also could take off some clothes.

"Dinner time!" Ann jumped at the sound of a voice so close to her ear. It was the same girl who had seen her near-accident. It was almost as if she were watching Ann to be on hand to help her. Ann remembered the little package her mother had tied about her waist that morning. It was one piece of bread, with a piece of pork fat spread on it. She realized she was very hungry.

THE HARNESS

After finishing their simple meal, Janet cupped her hand and brought up some water from a little pool formed by the water trickling down the walls of the cave. She drank it thirstily. Ann watched and then imitated her.

A whistle blew somewhere in the distance.

"Time to get to work." Janet slowly stood up, her body bent to conform to the shape of the curved walls of the passage.

"Now, we must get into the harness," she said, pointing to a pile of chains and metal hanging on hooks close to the tracks.

Ann hung back, frightened. "I'd rather just push with my hands," whispered Ann.

"Inspector 'll be by in a minute, and you'll be fined if you don't get 'em on."

Ann lifted one metal thing down. It was so heavy. She felt as if she were preparing her own coffin, as she separated the leather straps from the chains in order to get her arms and legs locked into it.

There was no time now to ask how she could get free of it in an emergency. What if the cart got going so fast she couldn't stop

it . . . like this morning? She remembered her moment of panic and the feel of Janet's sudden push against her shoulder. Nobody could help her once she had this harness on. She would have to be alert every instant to be sure that the wagon did not gain momentum beyond her power to control it.

Janet had her harness on and had started ahead, bending low as the passageway became smaller and smaller. Ann followed, her breath coming in short gasps. She was trying to control her panic. Janet was on her hands and knees, using her body to block the speed of the wagon. Ann was able to stay on her feet, but her head bumped against the ceiling as she moved slowly forward. She knew it wouldn't be long before she, too, would have to get down on all fours.

WORKING-CLASS WOMEN

STUDENT ACTIVITY

1. *Where* is the young woman in the story working?

2. *Why* is she working? List the conditions in her family which forced her to work.

3. Describe the working conditions on her job.

4. Compare and contrast this young woman's life with that of a young woman of the same age in pre-industrial times and today.

	Daily Activities	Family Relationships	Future Expectations
A Young Woman in Pre-Industrial Times			
The Young Woman in the Story			
A Young Woman Today			

I'M NOT COMPLAINING, MUM*

INTRODUCTION

The following imaginary letters were written by a young woman about 16 years old in England in the early 1800's. Her name is Alice. In these letters to her mother and sister Mary, she describes her working conditions as a maid to a middle-class woman named Mrs. Pinchback.

Alice has had to leave home because the Enclosure Acts have forced her family off the land. Her father has moved to another city to work as a weaver in a new workshop. Her mother and younger sister remain in the countryside working as day laborers digging turnips and weeding fields for a man who owns a large amount of land.

In this stage of the English Industrial Revolution, unemployment was very high. Many women did not work because there were no jobs. But for those women who did work, most of them worked as domestic servants. In fact, the majority of English working women were domestic servants throughout the 1800's and in the early 1900's. The English "nanny," or live-in baby-sitter, and the maid, the cook and the others all became part of the English way of life. For many people it was the only way to try to send money home to their families in the country towns and villages to keep them from starvation.

*Written by *In Search of Our Past* staff. Based on accounts from this period as cited in the bibliography for this unit.

I'M NOT COMPLAINING, MUM

Dear Mum,

I am fine. Moved in this big house last night. Mrs. Pinchback says I might become a lady's maid some day if I do my work and don't give her any trouble.

My job is downstairs maid. I clean all the rooms on the first floor. On Mondays I get up at 4:30 in the morning to help with the washing. And I help the cook in a pinch. But, Mum, it's the dusting that scares me. So many little breakables everywhere . . . things made out of glass and china. I hope I don't break anything. She'll take money out of my wages for breakage.

I'm not complaining, though, Mum. After that lodging house, this is wonderful. I will try to please her so I can send you a little every month.

Love,
Your daughter, Alice

Dear Mum,

It's very late. Rose is already asleep. We share a bed in the attic. She's the upstairs maid. She cleans four bedrooms, besides pressing the clothes for the family. What fancy dresses the ladies wear, Mum. The young ones are not much older than I am. Rose says it's a real chore to keep them looking so nice. The young ladies never pick up their clothes, just let them lie on the floor. I think I'd like to pick up after them. Just touching those beautiful dresses would be lovely.

Tell Mary I shall write her soon. I miss her so much. She must be very useful to you now that Papa has gone. Maybe one day she and I could be in service together.

Love,
Alice

Dear Mum,

I am so happy today. Mrs. Pinchback praised me for the way I ironed the lace napkins. Last week I tore the lace on one, and she was very angry. I had to do them over and missed my supper. Imagine, Mama, wiping your face on lace! I never saw such things before. And you should see the china dishes . . . so thin you can see your hand through them! My hands tremble whenever I wash the tea cups. I pray I never drop one of those dishes! Cook watches me carefully. She won't even let the scullery maid touch them. Says she's too clumsy.

Love,
Alice

Dear Mum,

It's raining here. It makes the cleaning harder because everybody gets mud on their boots and it sticks to the carpets. That's my special job, cleaning carpets. I have a big stiff brush and I have to get down on my knees to use it. The upstairs maid told me that in March or April we have to take up every carpet in the house and take them outside and beat them with sticks. At least I'll get out in the sun. I am so tired of dark gloomy London weather. I never see a flower growing. I keep thinking of those little primroses by our door.

Write me Mama, please,
Alice

Dear Mum,

It's late and my candle is almost burned out. But, I have good news. Rose, the upstairs maid, left yesterday because she's getting married. The missus says I can have her place, if I learn to press dresses properly.

I'll get more money to send you, Mama, and now maybe Mary won't have to leave home to find work, at least a little longer. She's only thirteen, and this is very hard work. Some places aren't so nice, either. I've heard about husbands who don't treat servant girls with respect. My little sister shouldn't have to face that.

I hear that wages in the textile mills are better. Some girls make enough to put by for a rainy day. And the hours are regular, not like here. At 6 a.m. I fix fires in the bedrooms, being very careful not to wake the sleeping family. Mrs. P. says she needs her "beauty" sleep. Then, I carry up buckets of water to fill the tubs so they can bathe before breakfast. That is the heaviest load, going up and down stairs with all that water. And I mustn't spill any on the fancy carpets either.

After that, I'm busy making beds, cleaning fireplaces, dusting the rooms and emptying the chamber pots, and doing any mending or pressing the missus requires. After dinner, I must set a fire again in each bedroom and bring up more water for bedtime use. I hardly ever get to bed before 10 o'clock. If there's company, it's much later. We servants have to wait up so that the fires are burning when the family retires. Then I go down to help the servants clean up the drawing room and kitchen before we can go to bed ourselves.

Love,
Alice

Dear Mary,

Mama tells me that you are coming to London soon to work in a textile mill. I am so happy. Soon you'll be making more money than I do. I hope it will be a mill where there are lots of nice girls. You will get Saturday afternoon and all day Sunday free. Maybe you can come to see me than. Since you are my sister, missus might let me off for an hour on Sunday afternoon. She is very particular about who I see. Last Sunday after Church, a young man walked me home. We had been properly introduced by the Minister's wife, but Mrs. Pinchback was very upset. She said it wasn't decent for us to be alone together, even in the daylight. She was so cross to him that I'm sure he'll never come back. He was nice, something like Johnny Miller. You know, the baker's son.

Write to me, Mary,and tell me your address. It is so wonderful to think of having my family near me.

Your loving sister,
Alice

WORKING-CLASS WOMEN

STUDENT ACTIVITY

1. ***Where*** **is the young woman in the story working?**

2. ***Why*** is she working? List the conditions in her family which forced her to work.

3. Describe the working conditions on her job.

4. **Compare and contrast this young woman's life with that of a young woman of the same age in pre-industrial times and today.**

	Daily Activities	**Family Relationships**	**Future Expectations**
A Young Woman in Pre-Industrial Times			
The Young Woman in the Story			
A Young Woman Today			

BE BRAVE AND WORK HARD*

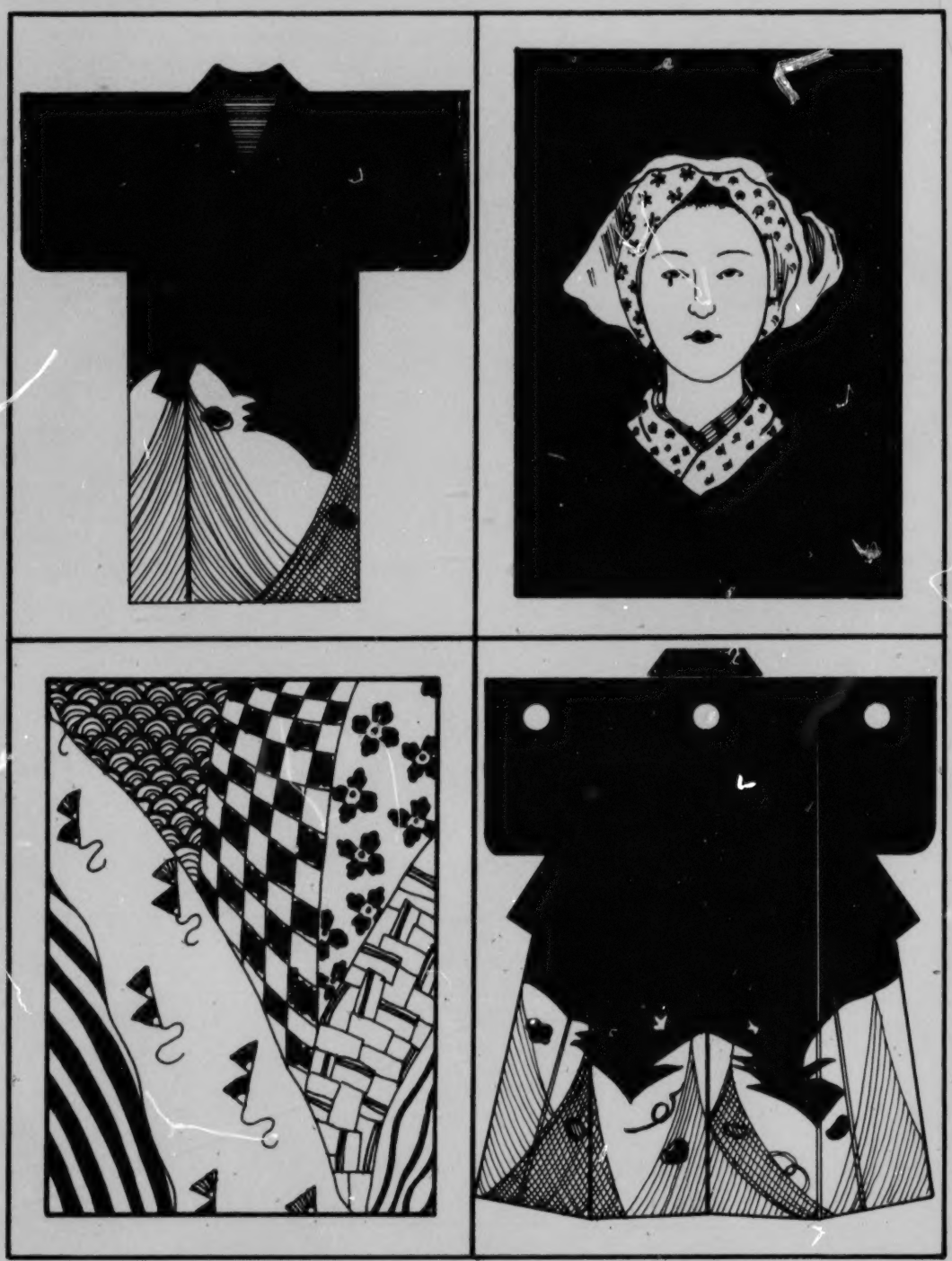
INTRODUCTION

The following story is about a 16-year-old woman in Japan named Haruko (which means "girl of spring" in Japanese). The story takes place in the 1880's. Haruko's family is very poor. To try to save her family from losing all their land because of unpaid debts, Haruko goes to work in the city. There she finds conditions in the textile factory much different from what she had hoped.

In Japan during these first stages of the Industrial Revolution, young women such as Haruko made up the majority of the industrial factory work force for many years. These young girls were recruited from poor families in the countryside by unscrupulous labor contractors who made it sound as if all they had to do was work in the city for a few months and all their family's financial problems would be solved. Some of these girls were actually sold into prostitution and then were too ashamed of what had happened to report it to their parents or to try to run away and go home. Others, like Haruko, went to work in factories, but found the work terribly hard.

Some of the attractions offered by the factories and labor contractors were dormitories for the young unmarried women, and meals. In reality, however, these were really only promises. The conditions described in the story were typical of most of these factories.

*Written by *In Search of Our Past* staff. Based on accounts from this period as cited in the bibliography for this unit.



BE BRAVE AND WORK HARD

Haruko huddled sleepily under the thin, tattered quilt. It was still inky dark outside but already she could hear the sounds of her mother starting the charcoal stove and washing the rice for breakfast. Haruko wondered if her mother would cook enough for everyone to eat today since this was her last day at home. That thought made her wide awake. No, there wouldn't be much to eat because their remaining rice store was very low. It would still be three months before the next harvest. Could her family hold out?

Haruko started to dress slowly. Twelve years ago they had heard the great news. The new Meiji government was going to give the poor peasants land! How happy they had been. How filled with hope. Before that, almost 80% of every crop was taken by the local landlord and the rice merchants. No matter how hard they worked and how good the harvest, Haruko could never remember having enough to eat. But when they heard they were going to get their own land, everyone thought they would be free from hunger and exploitation. Now they could work for themselves. Haruko had only been four when that happened. But she remembered her father and mother's happiness very well.

But today, all that seemed so long ago. All the hopes of that time were gone. Yes, they had received their parcel of land. But being so poor, they had nothing to start with. They needed an ox and plow, seeds, and fertilizer. And most surprising of all they needed money for rent. Their old landlord's chief aide had come to demand rent for their house.

"Rent?" Haruko's father had asked. "But we have lived here all our lives without paying rent. Even my grandfather was born here. Why do we pay rent now?"

The aide said, "Because of the land reform, you are no longer a peasant of our landlord entitled to a house. You are a free farmer. As such, you must now pay rent to our landlord for this house. If you cannot pay rent, you must leave this house."

"But how can I leave?" Haruko's father said, "I have no place to go."

"If you stay, you must pay rent," said the aide. "Well, I'll leave you to think about it for a few days."

"Thank you," Father said.

Haruko remembered that conversation well. A few days later when the old landlord's representative returned, he had offered to lend Haruko's father the money necessary for seeds, rent and an ox. Overjoyed, he had signed a paper agreeing to pay back the loan in five years. It had not mattered to Father that he was now in debt to his former landlord. Father thought only of his land. With the land he would accomplish everything.

But the money loan proved more powerful than the land, even more powerful than Haruko's father and three brothers, who had labored night and day. Slowly, they had sold pieces of their precious land to pay the debt. Slowly, the debt with interest kept growing. Slowly, it had ruined her father's health until now, a bent, sad old man, he could only do light work.

Haruko thought about it all as she finished dressing and carefully folded her sleeping mat. Once she had dreamed of marrying the son of a farmer and working the land alongside him. Today, after breakfast, she would walk the road into town. From there she would take the new train into Osaka to go to work in a new textile factory. Two neighbor girls had gone several months ago, and already they were sending money back home. Haruko hoped to do the same. With her father disabled, she had signed up with a labor recruiter to work for wages to help pay the family debt.

Haruko was determined to make her contribution to the family. But when the time came to leave she burst into tears. Her mother cried and hugged her close saying, "Be good and be careful. Obey your managers well. We are depending on you." Her old father looked solemn and said, "Be brave and work hard."

Then, her elder brother walked with her to the crossroads, carrying the lunch her mother had prepared. As they parted, her brother said, "I'll do my best to work well here. You do your best in the city, OK?" Haruko nodded and began the long walk to the train station.

Once the train got to Osaka, Haruko already felt less alone. Many of the young girls in the train were going to the city to work. A few were even going to the same factory. Excitedly, they all compared notes. Much to her surprise, Haruko found that her family's situation was very similar to that of many others. All the young women were recruited to work in factories because their families were in debt. The young men stayed to work the land while the young women moved to the cities. They had all been provided with the same things: a place to stay in a factory-owned dormitory, meals, pay sent to parents and time off on Sundays.

Somehow, though, none of them knew exactly what it would be like. So, they were unprepared for the reality. The dormitories were extremely crowded. There was hardly enough room for everyone to lie down—16 women in a small room. The food was barley, the cheapest, poorest food in all Japan. The work day often was from 12 to 16 hours.

Haruko cried every night the first week. Her head hurt from the noise in the factory, where she raced to manage the power looms assigned her. If she was slow, the foreman would shout and threaten her. Hour after hour she had worked as fast as she could. At the end of the shift she could barely eat her bowl of barley before falling asleep. The only thing that kept her going was the thought of her family depending on her. Each morning she awoke wanting to go home, only to realize she could not. Indeed, the other women who had worked there for several months told her the only way home was to become sick. Then the manager would send her home immediately and replace her with another, healthier girl from the countryside.

WORKING-CLASS WOMEN

STUDENT ACTIVITY

1. *Where* is the young woman in the story working?

2. *Why* is she working? List the conditions in her family which forced her to work.

3. Describe the working conditions on her job.

4. Compare and contrast this young woman's life with that of a young woman of the same age in pre-industrial times and today.

Daily Activities	Family Relationships	Future Expectations	
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THE MIDDLE-CLASS "IDEAL WOMAN"

THE THREE NEW CLASSES CREATED BY THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

The vast majority of people during feudalism lived in the countryside. During the Industrial Revolution these people generally became the new working class in the cities and towns, working in factories and mines and as domestic servants. Besides creating the working class, the Industrial Revolution also created a new class of extremely wealthy bankers, merchants and industrialists. These wealthy people controlled the economic life of the entire country and had so much wealth they lived even better than the kings and lords of feudalism. In England, these wealthy families often had 25 or more servants at each of several homes

they owned all over the country. In Japan, the wealthy became sponsors of artisans and craftspeople, buying many beautiful pieces of art to decorate their homes.

The Industrial Revolution also created a new middle class who were neither as rich as the bankers and industrialists nor as poor as the working class. Many of them were craftspeople and small traders from feudal times, such as carpenters and greengrocers, whose work was not drawn into the new factories. Other members of the middle class came into being because of the kinds of jobs brought about by the Industrial Revolution, such as clerks, bank managers and professionals.

The middle class had two sides to it. On the one hand, the middle class had enough money and had the dream that it could be just like the wealthy. One the other hand, they not only did not have the same kind of wealth as the rich, they sometimes came very near to being forced into the working class because the new technologies and factories wiped out some of the small shops and handcrafts. It was from this desire to imitate upper-class lifestyles, and the need to show they were not members of the working class, that the image of the "ideal woman" emerged.

THE MIDDLE-CLASS WOMAN

In feudal times, many women and girls had participated in economically productive work as part of the crafts and trades. But as the Industrial Revolution began, many of the crafts and trades began to disappear. A blacksmith, for instance, could not make nails by hand nearly as fast or as well as a machine. So a machine replaced the work he had once done, and his job. Fearful of being displaced, and determined to protect their jobs,

the guilds (the organizations which represented the different crafts and trades) began to exclude women in order to keep up their business and their income. The men members assumed that if the men's income could be kept high enough, they could then stay in business even with the competition from the new factories. For example, if a blacksmiths' or metalworkers' guild had 100 members including 20 women, and an iron foundry set up shop in the same town, the competition from the foundry would reduce the work available to all guild members. This would mean a loss of income. If the 20 women members were eliminated, the remaining 80 men members would have more work and therefore more income.

In any case, middle-class women in the cities during the transition to the Industrial Revolution were purposefully excluded from productive work. This was the beginning of the assumption that men are supposed to be the breadwinner and that women should stay home. This was also the beginning of the idea that women should stay out of the labor force because their "competition" would bring down wages and cause a hardship for men.

THE MIDDLE-CLASS "IDEAL WOMAN"

As the pace of economic life increased during the Industrial Revolution, the middle class became more and more affluent. This affluence, enough to allow a middle-class family to live on one income, plus the presence of cheaper ready-made goods, made it possible for the middle class to live a lifestyle similar to that of the wealthy. Budgets were watched carefully, and although the middle-class wife could not afford 25 servants, she could afford two or three servants, thereby relieving her of many household burdens and lending to her life an image of leisure.

The image of the "ideal woman" developed gradually. According to the image, the middle-class "ideal woman" was married and had children. She did not work. In fact, she was not supposed to work. Work was considered to be coarse and unfeminine. Work was a man's world.

The woman's world was the supposedly gentler realm of home and children. She was to be as much alike as possible to women of the wealthy class—managing servants, caring for children and cultivating the finer arts such as embroidery and music. Because she was expected not to work outside the home, the middle-class woman had to depend on her husband for everything, incuding her own survival. Her existence was defined through her husband and children—as they succeeded and prospered, so did she. If she failed to be a good helper to her husband, or if her children failed to conform to the expectations of reproducing the ideal middle-class life, the middle-class woman herself was a failure. Thus, her life became preoccupied with making a good marriage, helping her husband succeed in his career and helping her children succeed in their educaton. As the Industrial Revolution progressed, the middle-class woman's dependence on her husband and her role as wife and mother developed into a stereotyped notion of what *all women* ought to be.

This is the way one writer summed up the "ideal woman":

"The ideal marriageable girl should expect to have the following: softness and weakness, delicacy and modesty, a small waist and curving shoulders, and an endearing ignorance of everything that went on beyond household and social life. Husbands did not require brains in their wives. They demanded charm, a high sense of domestic duty, admiration for and submission to themselves, and the usual accomplishments necessary for entertaining friends."[1]

[1] *The Early Victorian Woman*, Janet Dunbar, George G. Harrap & Co., Ltd., London, 1953, p. 20.

The idea that women should not work also became an important part of the man's ideal. If his wife did not have to work, it showed that he was a good and hard-working husband able to support his wife properly. The middle-class wife at home meant that the middle-class man was a cut above the working-class man whose wife had to work because the working-class man's income was not enough to support the family.

Basically, the middle-class "ideal woman" can be summarized as follows:

- A woman did not work for money but was economically dependent on her husband.
- This meant that young middle-class women had to cultivate all the charms and talents meant to attract a good husband and then help him succeed in his career.
- The husband was supposed to be strong and responsible to provide for and protect his wife and family.
- At least one or more servants were needed to do most of the housework and child care so that the wife could have leisure time to cultivate artistic and social talents.
- Fashions in hair, clothes and home furnishings were copied from the rich and emphasized style and leisure.
- Women were supposed to be protected from the world outside the home and were to be kept pure and innocent in thought and deed.

THE MIDDLE-CLASS "IDEAL WOMAN"

STUDENT ACTIVITY

1. What was the middle class? How was it different from the upper and working classes?

2. How did the middle class change from the feudal middle class during the Industrial Revolution?

3. Describe the change in status of women of the middle class from feudalism to the Industrial Revolution. Give an example of this change.

4. What did this change mean in terms of an "ideal woman?"

WHAT DID THE "IDEAL WOMAN" WEAR . . . AND WHY?

In the drive to copy the wealthy and to reflect their own new ideas of womanhood, fashion became a new industry with a large market among the middle class. Variations of styles of dress among the women of wealth was not new. In feudal times, however, only women of the landlord class or the royal court could afford the fashionable clothes of the day. But the Industrial Revolution made ready-made clothes and cloth available and affordable to many of the middle classes for the first time. The

middle-class woman had enough money to purchase the latest of every fad. Her position as enhancer of her husband's career also made it important for her to be well dressed whenever she went out in public.

Women's clothing tended to emphasize the leisure aspect of the middle-class woman's life. There were "at home" dresses to entertain callers, afternoon clothes to go out shopping or to call on other people, dinner clothes for dining fashionably with one's husband, and of course evening and party clothes for going out at night or presiding over dinner parties at home.

In Japan, women's fashions also showed that middle- and upper-class women did not work. The Japanese woman's dress, called a kimono, had extremely long sleeves that gradually grew to such lengths during the Industrial Revolution that they almost touched the ground. The obi, or wide sash wrapped around the kimono, got wider and stiffer during the 19th century so that a

woman could hardly bend over, resembling in many ways the English corset. Commentators of that time said that these fashions reminded them of the long sleeves the court scholars used to wear that covered their hands to show they did not have to do manual labor.

In England, women's clothes emphasized the new middle-class ideal for women by eliminating functional and practical features. Skirts were so long men made jokes about being able to eliminate sweeping floors and streets because the skirts did that. Fashions became so extreme that women tried to completely reshape their bodies to emphasize their "weak and delicate nature." Here are two examples of the English fashion:

> Corsets were made of stiff material such as whalebone or metal strips, wrapped around the woman's body and pulled as tight as possible to cinch in the waist. It was held in place by strings that looked like shoelaces. Often, a servant would

put her foot in the wearer's back to get enough leverage to pull the laces tight. The ideal waistline was seventeen inches. The corset so constricted the abdomen that a woman was subject to fainting spells and shortness of breath. The corset also interfered with the ability to eat and digest food properly.

Crinolines were a series of hoops held together with canvas or horsehair strips to make the skirt or dress stand far out from the wearer's legs. The purpose was to make the waist look even smaller.

WHAT DID THE "IDEAL WOMAN" WEAR AND WHY?

STUDENT ACTIVITY

1. Could working-class women in the mines, factories, or domestic service wear such clothes? Why or why not?

2. How was the health of women affected by wearing such clothes? What would be the effect on personality and temperament?

3. Why do you think women insisted on wearing such clothes?

4. Can you think of modern clothing for women which has similar effects?

5. What changes in fashion have happened as women's roles have changed from the 19th century "ideal of womanhood"?

THE REALITY OF THE MIDDLE-CLASS WOMAN

The duality of the middle class, between the heaven of the wealthy and the hell of the working-class slum, had its less than ideal side for the woman. Her dependence on her husband made her a helpless victim of injustice and sometimes violence at his hands. Divorce was almost impossible for women in Japan and England. In addition, the woman's money and property became her husband's upon marriage and she had no rights over them, even if she earned money herself.

The middle-class wife was expected to bear her husband's children. Especially expected were sons. This expectation was rooted in the need, which we saw also during feudal times, to insure that a man's property was inherited by his true heirs and offspring. The son, especially the eldest, was needed to inherit the property of the father. This can still be seen today in the desire of some men to pass on their trade or business to their sons. A son was necessary, as well, to carry on the family name. The middle-class woman, as the bearer of her husband's children, was clearly a vehicle for the transmission of his property. She had no right to her own children.

The middle-class woman was excluded completely from public life—life outside the home—except for social occasions. She had no contact with the economic and political decision making of the country. Although it seemed to be a "dream world" of having no responsibilities and cares, the exclusion from the real world outside the home stunted the middle-class woman's personality. She lived a very isolated and lonely existence—on her pedestal!

Weakness in a woman not only was a virtue, but was supposed to be an important part of her character. Women came to be thought of not only as weak physically, fainting at the sight of a

mouse or the least emotional distress, but as weak in character as well, unable to think rationally or make decisions.

For many women, the material comforts of the ideal life were not enough to compensate for a life of dependency and lack of meaning outside of husband and children. Some women became chronically depressed and others displayed a variety of physical illnesses as they shouldered the burden of bridging the gap between the empty and sad reality of their lives and the idolization of their position.

JUST BETWEEN US MEN*

INTRODUCTION

The following conversation takes place in a living room of a house in a big city in Japan in the 1910's.

The conversation takes place between three characters: Mr. Fukuzawa, a wealthy banker; Mr. Sato, a long-time customer of Fukuzawa's bank, and Mr. Ito, a young merchant who has just recently become a customer at Fukuzawa's bank. Ito and Sato are thinking of going into business together and financing their venture with a substantial loan from Fukuzawa's bank.

The three men have just finished dinner at Mr. Sato's house and are waiting for Mrs. Sato to begin the entertainment of the evening by playing the *koto*, a Japanese harp.

*Written by *In Search of Our Past* staff. Based on accounts from this period as cited in the bibliography of this unit.

JUST BETWEEN US MEN

Ito: Mr. Sato, thank you very much for the dinner. I am very grateful for your kindness and hospitality.

Sato: Well, it's really nothing. My wife really is not a good cook. She cooks only simple country food, not really fit for a fine dinner in the city. She is also only a fair koto player. Although she studied for many years, I think she is not really talented. Nevertheless, I hope you will honor us by staying to listen.

Ito: Well, actually I thought when she served us dinner she was very well-bred and polite. Just between us men, I think she is a real credit to you and your family.

Fukuzawa: Mr. Ito, don't you have some good news for us tonight?

Ito: Ah, er, well . . .

Fukuzawa: Now Mr. Ito. Please speak up. Is it something special?

Ito: (blushing) Yes, actually, my wife had a baby two days ago.

Sato: What good news! Your first child?

Ito: Yes, it was a boy.

Sato: A first-born son! My, how fortunate you are. You must have a fine wife to give you a son right away. We only have two daughters here. Daughters, after all, are only here long enough to eat rice before they go as brides to someone else's house.

Ito: Well, yes. A son is an accomplishment isn't it? (laughing) But daughters are very sweet.

Sato: That is easy for you to say who now has a son. I want to have a son to carry on my business.

Fukuzawa: Mr. Ito, congratulations! We must have a toast. (raises wine cup) To the health of your son. May you have many more. (drinks) Now tell us about your wife. Is she in good health?

Ito: Yes, she is doing well. The midwife says she is strong enough to have many more children.

Sato: That's very good. A strong wife who gave you a son the first time. You are very lucky.

Ito: Yes, thank you. I was thinking of inviting the two of you to my home soon. My wife is a samisen* player. She is not very talented, but perhaps you might enjoy such an entertainment.

Fukuzawa: Ah, having a good wife who gives you sons and is artistic as well makes you very fortunate. I accept your invitation. Young man, it is a pleasure to do business with you!

*samisen—a three stringed Japanese instrument somewhat like a guitar.

THE MIDDLE CLASS LOOKS DOWN ON THE WORKING-CLASS WOMAN

Hovering between wealth and the fear of falling into the working class, the middle class developed an ambiguous attitude toward the working-class woman. On the one hand, the working-class girl servant became indispensable to the middle-class home, doing the heavy chores and home maintenance so that the mistress of the house could enjoy the finer things of life, such as artistic and musical pursuits and afternoon teas.

On the other hand, the middle-class woman looked down on the working-class woman because she worked and because she did not attend to the role of wife and mother with the same constant devotion that she, the middle-class wife, thought necessary.

In industrial England, the word "spinster" originally described women who made a living spinning thread. It later came to mean a contemptible woman who worked in the textile mills and did not marry. The spinster was always the outcast of the family—always called on to help, but never included in the family functions.

In Japan, the term *shokugyo fujin*, or "occupation woman," came to mean the same thing. It was a slightly contemptible term used to describe the working woman. She was considered unfeminine and an unsuitable match for marriage to a prosperous middle-class son.

This tendency to look down on the working class while at the same time depending on the working class for its lifestyle can be seen in the areas of the middle-class woman's relationship to her servants, and in the middle-class attitude toward marriage.

THE
NOTED
STOUT
HOUSE

THE DOMESTIC SERVANT

The domestic servant was an absolute necessity for the middle-class woman to live her middle class life. Servants handled all the heavy and distasteful aspects of housework and child care. In an era when there was little or no indoor plumbing, maids carried wash water into the house and heated it and carried it up and down the stairs for all washing and cooking and bathing. They also carried away the chamber pots which served as toilets. They also had to keep the house clean and the children diapered and cared for in an era when there were no washing machines, no vacuum cleaners, no sewing machines, and no other appliances.

Wages were so low that entering domestic service for most girls served the purpose of insuring lodgings and food rather than providing an income to have a decent livelihood. Some mistresses expected that their girl servants would never marry but instead devote themselves to a lifetime of service to the family for whom they worked.

MARRIAGE

Marriage was the indispensable method to preserve the middle-class status and enhance the family's upward mobility. It was absolutely necessary that a young girl make a good catch and marry someone of the proper status and background. In turn, it was absolutely necessary that she produce children, and especially sons to carry on the family business or trade.

For these reasons, the middle-class family looked after their daughters with extreme care and carefully screened any prospective brides for their sons. The entire future of the family and its business, and therefore its class status, depended on a correct and careful choice.

THE MIDDLE CLASS LOOKS DOWN ON THE WORKING-CLASS WOMAN

STUDENT ACTIVITY

1. Why was the middle-class woman scornful of the working class woman?

2. In what ways did the work of the domestic servant make the middle-class woman's lifestyle possible?

3. Can you speculate why the domestic servant was paid so little for her work?

4. Do you see any similarities in the way society viewed the middle-class woman and her domestic servant? What is the difference in the way society viewed them?

5. Why was a "good marriage" so important for a middle-class girl? Imagine a "bad marriage" and what it might be like.

THE MIDDLE CLASS LOOKS DOWN ON THE WORKING-CLASS WOMAN
Illustration of the "Ideal Woman" and the Working-Class Reality

STUDENT ACTIVITY

1. Carefully look at the woman in the center of the drawing on page 65. What is she doing?

2. Carefully look at the women in the drawings around her. What are these women doing?

3. Why do you think there is such a contrast between the woman in the center and the rest of the women?

4. To what class would the woman in the center belong? To what class do the women in the surrounding drawings belong? Why is this important to understanding the whole drawing?

MY DEAREST BROTHER ALBERT*

INTRODUCTION

You have already read the letters "I'm Not Complaining, Mum," written by young Alice, who was a maid in Mrs. Pinchback's house. The following letter, "My Dearest Brother Albert," was written by Mrs. Pinchback herself, describing many of the same incidents found in Alice's letters, but from Mrs. Pinchback's point of view. Notice the differences!

My Dearest Brother Albert,

Thank you for your letter of the 10th. We here are all in good health. I would be content if it were not for the problems with the servants. Daily, I have many interesting conversations with afternoon callers. And my dear friend, Charlotte, and I have taken up pottery painting. I will send you a good sample soon.

But my dear brother, what is to be done with servants these days? The upstairs maid has run off to be married with hardly two weeks' notice. I suspect it was less for love than to spite me after I refused to excuse her from clearing up after supper. She claimed she was tired. Tired!! Can you imagine? What was I to do? If she did not clean up after supper, I would have no chance for pleasant conversation with my husband. And what are servants for, anyway?

Be that as it may, she is gone. I think I shall bring the downstairs maid upstairs to wait on me. Yet it may be costly. I doubt she will accept less than 2 shillings a week. What has come over these people? What happened to the days when one could find serving people at less than a shilling a week and expect a lifetime of honest service and a full day's work?

*Written by *In Search of Our Past* staff. Based on accounts from this period as cited in the bibliography of this unit.

I wonder if the new girl will give me trouble. Not long ago she tore a lace napkin, one of the set Mother gave me as a special gift. And last Sunday she dared to come home escorted by a young man. I gave both of them a stern lecture. The girl was out in the full daylight with him. She even dressed to look like a young woman from a respectable class! Don't servants these days know their place? Ah! Remember our dear Esther? She always dressed plainly and was so polite, even though we were only children. Oh, to find a jewel of a maid like her again.

Well, I am afraid I bore you with these details. I suspect you must be having your woes with servants, too. It seems a common problem to all respectable classes these days. I will close now. May God keep you.

Your sister,
Emily

MY DEAREST BROTHER ALBERT

STUDENT ACTIVITY

1. What does Mrs. Pinchback expect from her servants?

2. What does this letter tell you about the mistress-servant relationship?

3. How does Mrs. Pinchback explain why the previous upstairs maid left her? How does Mrs. Pinchback explain Alice's walk home from church with the young man? How does Mrs. Pinchback explain Alice's pay?

4. Compare these explanations with those of Alice.

5. What kind of lifestyle do the servants make possible for Mrs. Pinchback? Could such a lifestyle be possible without servants?

6. What kind of lifestyle is possible for the servants?

7. Do you think you would like to live like Mrs. Pinchback? Why or why not?

PREPARE TO ACCEPT WOMAN'S DESTINY*

Elder Brother tells me that you have finished high school. I am very happy and pleased now that you are one of the very few girls to have finished high school in all of Japan. I have heard that your school is especially famous for the teaching of cooking and flower arranging. These talents are so important. They will mean you will be an excellent choice as a wife.

*Written by *In Search of Our Past* staff. Based on accounts of this period as cited in the bibliography for this unit.

I hope you have given much thought to becoming a proper wife. It is woman's destiny to marry and devote her life to husband and family. Everything we women do should prepare us to accept this destiny. Without marriage we have no future, no filfillment in life. This is why Elder Brother, out of affection for you, asked me to write to you.

Ever since our dear parents passed away several years ago, Elder Brother has done his best to carry on the carpentry shop he worked in with Father. Elder Brother has become the head of our family and looks out for us. Very soon, he will begin to be approached by marriage go-betweens about arranging a marriage for you to a fine young man. You know Elder Brother will find a good match for you—a man with the right background and from a respected family. That is why you should do nothing to make yourself unattractive.

I have heard that labor recruiters have approached some of your friends from high school about becoming government secretaries and clerks. I hope you will refuse their offers. If you become one of those shokugyo fuhin *[occupation women], no man from a respectable family will want to marry you. After all, as an occupation woman you must appear in public and make manly and harsh decisions. Such a situation cannot but help form your character incorrectly. You will become coarse and unfeminine. Please do not become an occupation woman. I request this of you very urgently.*

I hope that other than this question, there is nothing else to trouble your mind in any way. We women must prepare to accept woman's destiny.

I hope you remain in good health.

Your sister,
Emiko

PREPARE TO ACCEPT WOMAN'S DESTINY

STUDENT ACTIVITY

1. To what class do you think Emiko, her sister and Elder Brother belong?

2. What seems to be Emiko's attitude toward working women? Why?

3. Why does she try to keep her sister from going to work?

4. What does Emiko think is "woman's destiny"? Do you agree? Why or why not?

5. Write an imaginary letter to someone today about things which might make a woman unsuitable for marriage.

MODERN-DAY EXPECTATIONS OF WOMEN: IS THE MIDDLE-CLASS "IDEAL" STILL WITH US?

STUDENT ACTIVITY

Fill out the following questionnaire based on what you think most women are expected to do. Circle the words that complete the sentence.

1. Women (should / should not) work and plan a lifetime career like men.
2. Women (should / should not) work after marriage.
3. Women (should / should not) work while raising children.
4. Women (should / should not) do most of the housework and child care if they work outside the home.
5. Women (are / are not) more emotional than rational.
6. Women (are / are not) physically weak and unathletic.
7. Women (should / should not) spend most of their time trying to get married to a man with a career.
8. Women (are / are not) better at literature and the arts than men.
9. Woman (are / are not) better at science and math than men.
10. Women (are / are not) "tomboys" if they like athletics.
11. Women (are / are not) taking jobs from men if they go to work in fields such as business management, sciences, medicine, or sports writing.

WHERE DID OUR EXPECTATIONS COME FROM?

Today's expectations of both men and women are often modern dress-ups of middle-class ideals generated during the Industrial Revolution. The desire to look like a movie star who is young and sexy is a media adaptation of the 19th century "ideal middle-class woman," who tried to be as appealing as possible to the right man so she could be supported by him as a wife in the proper middle-class style.

In modern life, however, more and more women are going outside the house to work. In 1978, for the first time in American history except for World War II, the majority of women were in the work force. The middle class "ideal" is still with us though, since these women are still expected to take care of the house and children as if they were not working. The "double burden" of housework and wage work falls solidly on the shoulders of the millions of working women in this country. This is in spite of the fact that the majority of women who work do so out of economic necessity. Often the husband's wages are not enough to support the family. Or they are the head of the family due to divorce or widowhood. Many women, just like men, find great fulfillment in working outside the home.

Government attitude also seems to be conditioned by the old middle-class notion that women should not work. Funds appropriated for child care and after-school programs are among the first to be cut back during times of economic trouble. And women are not considered part of unemployment statistics if they have given up trying to find a job and return home to housework and child care.

There are many other ways the middle-class "ideal" still remains with us. Women, supposedly, are not rational and cannot do science, math, politics, or anything else which requires rational thought. The 19th century middle-class woman was not supposed to know anything about worldly matters, confining herself to literature and the arts—a stereotype which remains with us today.

Women, it is thought, are not athletic. Confined in corsets and wearing long skirts and/or sleeves, many middle-class women in the Industrial Age seldom went out-of-doors, much less took part in strenuous exercise or athletics.

As a result of these and other historically derived ideas about women, today we still see such things as men's sports having priority over women's sports, few women in science and math, even fewer women in politics, and working women feeling guilty because their homes are not as clean as those of their neighbors who do not work.

The final touch to making women a prisoner of these expectations was when these weaknesses came to be thought of as "natural." Women are supposed to be weak because it is their nature to be weak—or so ran the logic of the day. Women came to be "naturally" weak, passive, unathletic, irrational and emotional. Any woman who did not conform was "unnatural." She was considered unfeminine, unwomanly or, even worse, "mannish." Women who tried to enter politics, be athletic or get into the sciences were accused of trying to be like a man. This is where words such as "tomboy" come from.

ORAL HISTORY/STUDENT INTERVIEWS

STUDENT ACTIVITY

Interview a husband and wife. Make sure the husband and wife you select meet these two criteria: 1) they have children, and 2) the wife works outside the home.

The people you decide on may be your own parents.

Ask the interviewees the following questions. Take notes carefully. After the interview, think back over what your interviewees have said and complete the worksheet "Some Questions to Think About."

Interview Questions for the Wife

1. Where do you work? Can you describe the kind of work you do? How long have you been working there?

   Is this your first job? If not, what are some of the other jobs you have had?

2. Why do you work?

3. Do you enjoy working? Why or why not?

4. How many children do you have?

5. Did you work while they were very young? Why or why not?

6. What are some of the problems of working while being a wife and mother at the same time?

7. Do you enjoy working and being a parent at the same time?

8. What are some of the benefits of doing both?

9. How do you try to resolve some of the problems?

10. What do your husband and children think about the fact that you work? Why?

Interview Questions for the Husband

1. Where do you work? Can you describe the kind of work you do?

   How long have you been working there?

   Is this your first job? If not, what are some of the other jobs you have had?

2. Why do you work?

3. Do you enjoy working? Why or why not?

4. How many children do you have?

5. Did you work while they were very young? Why or why not?

6. What are some of the problems of working and being a husband and father at the same time?

7. Do you enjoy working and being a parent at the same time?

8. What are some of the benefits of doing both?

9. How do you try to resolve some of the problems?

10. What do your wife and children think about the fact that you work? Why?

ORAL HISTORY/STUDENT INTERVIEWS

STUDENT ACTIVITY

1. Compare the answers you got from the wife-mother and the husband-father. Where do you see any differences? Similarities?

2. Are there any differences in the reasons why they work?

3. Are there any differences in the jobs they have?

4. How do they view their roles as wife-mother or husband-father in relationship to their work? To their children? To each other? Are there any differences? If so, what? Can you explain those differences?

5. Given the problems they see (if any) in having both the husband and the wife working, how are they working to solve those problems? Do you think that they share the housework and child-care responsibilities? How? Why or why not?

ORAL INTERVIEW

DIRECTIONS

1. Make a date in advance with the person you want to interview. In making this contact be sure to explain the purpose of the interview and the topics you wish to cover.

2. Allow at least 30 minutes for the interview.

3. Begin the interview by explaining again the purpose of the interview and the topics you wish to cover. Be sure the interviewee consents to be interviewed.

4. Ask only one question at a time. Avoid questions which lead to yes-or-no answers. If you do get yes-or-no responses, then ask for an explanation. "Could you explain a little more, please?" Or, "Why did you feel that way?"

5. Take your notes on a separate page.

6. Be patient. Remember, most people have never been interviewed. It is an unusual experience. A person must have time to think about her or his answer. If you act as if you are in a hurry, the other person won't feel that her or his answers are important to you.

UNIT 3

Women in Change:
Twentieth Century Women in Transition

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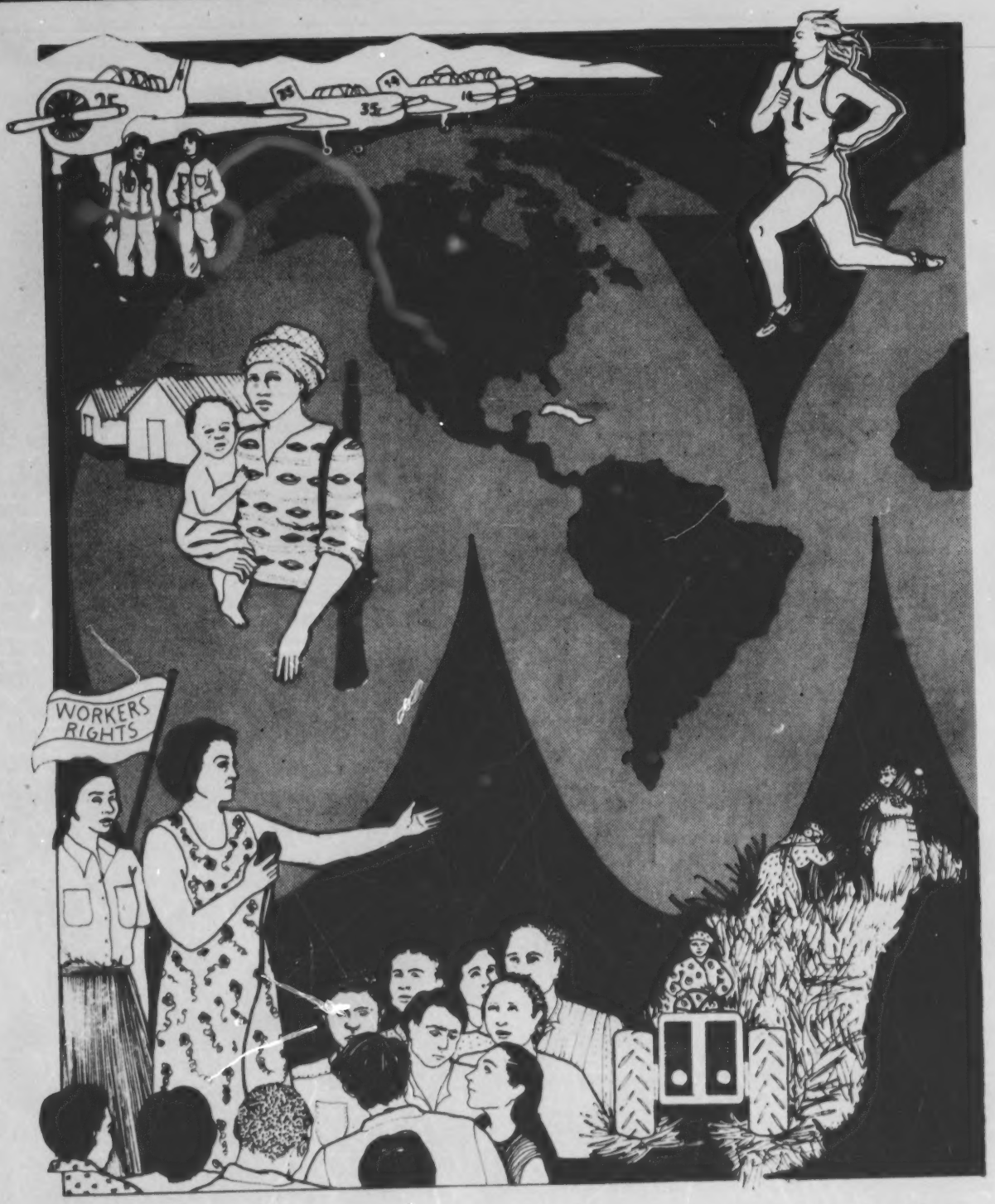

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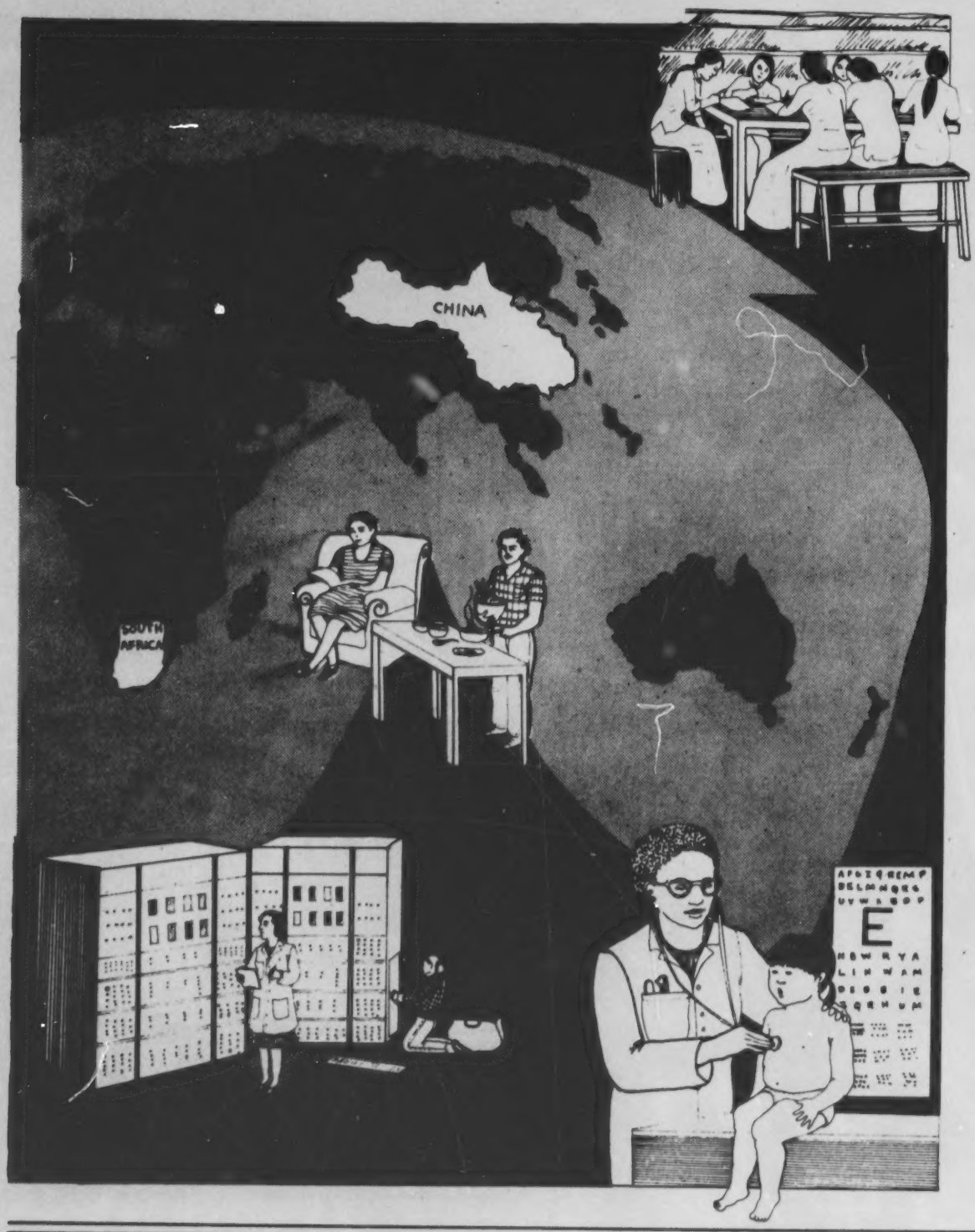

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THE REVOLT OF MOTHER

INTRODUCTION

This story describes the relationships between members of a traditional patriarchal family. It is a farm family which, although early twentieth century American, represents small farm families in many parts of the world.

The farm is a working unit where every family member has an important, productive role. Within this unit the women assume responsibilities for some tasks and the men for others.

In this story the woman comes to challenge one of her husband's major responsibilities—the decision about what should be built on the farm.

In the past, in many cultures women were given an important and often valued role to play within their families. Often, however, the kinds of decisions men could make gave them more power. Women were excluded from decisions about the nature of the family's economic base, the use of the family's money, the use of her time, her relationships beyond her family, the tasks she did, where the family should live, and the number of children she should have.

In "The Revolt of Mother," the woman's decision to override her husband's authority and his acquiesence give her more control over her life. It also shows her son and daughter, and possibly some women in the community, new potentials for the roles of women within the family.

THE REVOLT OF MOTHER*

"Father!"

"What is it?"

"I want to know what them men are diggin' over in the field for."

"I wish you'd go into the house, Mother, an' 'tend to your own affairs," the old man said.

"I ain't goin' into the house until you tell me what them men are doin' over there in the field," said she.

The old man looked as immovable as one of the rocks in his pasture-land. He finished saddling the horse and started out of the barn.

"FATHER!" said she.

"They're diggin' a cellar, I su'pose, if you've got to know."

"A cellar for what?"

"A barn."

"A barn? You ain't goin' to build a barn over there where we was goin' to have a house, father?"

The old man turned and rode out of the barn, not saying a word.

The woman watched him a moment and then went out of the barn across the yard to the house. It was a tiny little box-like house, the smallest building compared to the barn and to all the other sheds and out-buildings.

After the noon meal, and the children had left, Sarah spoke with a look of quiet determination on her face.

"Father, I've got somethin' I want to say to you. I want to know what you're building that barn for."

"I got nothin' to say," said her husband.

*Adapted from the short story "The Revolt of Mother," by Mary E. Wilkins Freeman.

"I'm goin' to talk real plain to you; I never have since I married you, but I'm goin' to now. You see this room, Father; it's all the one I've had to work in an' eat in and sit in since we was married. What would you have thought, Father, if we had had our weddin' in a room no better than this? An' this is all the room my daughter will have to be married in."

"Look here, Father."

Sarah Penn went across the room as though it were a stage. She flung open a door to point out their tiny bedroom, only large enough for a bed and bureau, with a path between.

She stepped to another door and opened it to show a tiny closet. "Here is all the pantry I've got— Father, I've been takin' care of the milk of six cows in this place, an' now you're goin' to build a new barn, an' keep more cows, an' give me more to do in it."

She threw open another door. A narrow, crooked flight of stairs wound upward to two unfinished chambers where their son and daughter had slept all their lives. "There ain't nothin' so good in this house as your horse's stall; it ain't so warm an' tight."

Sarah Penn stood before her husband. "Now, Father, I want to know if you think you're doin' right. When we was married, twenty-five year ago, you promised me faithful that we should have a new house built in that lot over in the field before the year was out. You said you had the money. You've been making more money, an' I've been savin' it for you ever since, an' you ain't built no house yet. You've built sheds an' cow-houses an' one new barn, an' now you're goin' to build another. You're lodgin' your dumb beasts better than you are your own flesh an' blood. I want to know if you think it's right."

"I ain't got nothin' to say. I've got to go off after that load of gravel. I can't stand here talkin' all day."

"Father, won't you think it over, an' have a house built there instead of a barn?"

Mr. Penn left the house, saying again, "I ain't got nothin' to say."

Daughter, Nanny, age 19, spoke as she entered the kitchen. "What are they diggin' for, Mother?"

"A cellar for a new barn."

"Oh, Mother, he ain't going to build another barn?"

"That's what he says."

A boy came in and stood before the kitchen glass, combing his hair slowly. He did not seem to pay any attention to the conversation.

"Sammy, did you know Father was going to build a new barn?" asked the girl.

He turned, and showed a face like his father's under his smooth crest of hair, "Yes, I s'pose I did."

"How long have you known it?" asked his mother.

"'Bout three months, I guess."

Sarah thought, he's just like his father. Never tells me a thing! It's like the men don't feel women should have any say.

Nanny looked at Sarah. "Mother, don't you think it's too bad Father's going to build that new barn, much as we need a decent house to live in?"

"You ain't found out yet we're women-folk, Nanny Penn. You ain't seen enough of men folks yet. One of these days you'll know that we know only what men folks think we should."

Nanny started sewing. Suddenly she looked up, and the tender red flamed all over her face and neck, "Mother, I've been thinking—I don't see how we're goin' to have any—wedding in this room. I'd be ashamed to have his folks come even if we didn't have anybody else."

"We ought to have the wedding in the new barn," said Nanny. Mrs. Penn stared at her with a curious expression. "Why, Mother, what makes you look so?" "Nothin," said she, turning away.

All through the Spring, there was great activity around the building of the barn. It was a magnificant building for such a little town. People came after Church on Sundays to see the progress of the work. The week the barn was to be finished, however, Mr. Penn received a letter from his brother-in-law telling him of a fine horse for sale. He decided to go away for three or four days and look at the horse.

Sarah helped her husband get ready for the trip. As he left, he said, "If them cows come today, Sammy can drive 'em into the new barn, an' when they bring the hay up, they can pitch it in there."

Sarah said, "Well," and began her baking.

By eleven o'clock she finished the pies just as the load of hay from the west field came slowly down the cart track and drew up at the new barn. Mrs. Penn ran out. "Stop!" she shouted—"stop!"

The men stopped and looked. "Why, he said to put it in here," said one of them.

"Don't you put the hay in the new barn; there's room enough in the old one, ain't there?" said Mrs. Penn.

"Room enough," returned the hired man. "didn't need the new barn, nohow, far as room's concerned."

Nanny and Sammy stared at each other. There was something strange about their mother's manner.

"What you goin' to do, Mother?" asked Nanny timidly.

"You'll see what I'm goin' to do," replied Mrs. Penn. "If you're through, Nanny, I want you to go upstairs an' pack up your things; an' I want you, Sammy, to help me take down the bed in the bedroom."

"Oh, Mother, what for?" gasped Nanny.

"You'll see."

During the next few hours Sarah Penn accomplished a major feat. She moved all their little household goods into the new barn while her husband was away. Nanny and Sammy followed their mother's instructions without a murmur; indeed, they were overawed. At five o'clock in the afternoon the little house in which the Penns had lived for twenty-five years had emptied itself into the new barn.

Sarah Penn had seen at a glance the possibilities for human comfort in the new barn. The great boxstalls, with quilts hung before them, would make better bedrooms than the one she had occupied for twenty-five years. The harness room, with its chimney and shelves, would make a kitchen of her dreams. The great middle space would make a fine parlor, fit for a palace. Upstairs there was as much room as down. With partitions and windows, what a house it would be!

When the four new cows arrived, Sarah ordered three to be put in the old barn, the other in the house shed where the cooking stove had stood. The hired man bringing the milk (at Sarah's orders) to the new barn instead of to the old house was astonished. Quickly, he spread the story all over the town. People came out just to see if it was really true that the cows were being put in the old house. Some thought Mrs. Penn had gone mad. But some of the town women stopped by to see how Sarah had fixed the place up. Most went home smiling, although never in living memory had a woman defied her husband like this. Everyone wondered how Mr. Penn would react when he came home.

On Saturday, when Mr. Penn was expected home, there was a group of men standing in the road near the new barn. The hired man had finished milking, but he hung around. Sarah Penn had a

supper of brown-bread, baked beans and a custard pie all ready. It was the supper Father loved on a Saturday night.

Nanny and Sammy couldn't take their eyes off their mother. She moved about with a new confidence which amazed and delighted them. Sammy looked out of the harness room window. "There he is," he announced in a whisper. Mrs. Penn kept on about her work.

The children watched while Mr. Penn tried to get in the front door of the old house. It was locked, so he went around to the shed. Nanny giggled when she thought of her father opening the shed door and seeing the cow instead of the cooking stove. Mr. Penn came out, looking about him in a dazed way. He took the new horse by the bridle and led it to the new barn. Nanny and Sammy slunk close to their mother. The barn doors rolled back, and there stood Mr. Penn, with the long face of the farm horse looking over his shoulder.

Nanny kept behind her mother, but Sammy stepped forward suddenly, and stood in front of her.

Mr. Penn stared at the group. "What on earth you all down here for?" said he. "What's the matter over to the house?"

"We've come here to live, Father," said Sammy, bravely.

The father stood speechless.

"What—" Mr. Penn said, sniffing the air—"What is it smells like cookin'?"

"You come in here, Father," said Sarah. She led the way into the harness room and shut the door. "Now Father," said she, "you needn't be scared. I ain't crazy. There ain't nothin' to be upset over. But we've come here to live, an' we're goin' to live here. We've got just as good a right here as new horses an' cows. The house wasn't fit for us to live in any longer, an' I made up my mind I wasn't goin' to stay there. I've done my duty by you twenty-five years, an' I'm goin' to do it now; but I'm goin' to live here. You've got to put in some windows and partitions; an' you'll have to buy some furniture."

"Why, Mother!" the old man gasped.

"You'd better take your coat off an' get washed—there's the wash-basin—an' then we'll have supper."

"Why, Mother!"

Without asking his father, Sammy led the new horse to the old barn. The old man saw him, and shook his head speechlessly. His wife helped him take off his coat; his arms seemed to lack the power. She smoothed his thin gray hair after he had washed. Then she put the supper on the table and the family drew up. Mr. Penn sat looking dazedly at his plate.

"Ain't you goin' to ask the blessin', Father?" asked Sarah.

And the old man bent his head and mumbled.

After supper, Mr. Penn went out and sat down on the step of the new barn. He looked out over the farm's fields. His eyes were thoughtful.

After the dishes were cleared away, Sarah went out to him. She bent over and nervously touched her husband on one of his thin shoulders. "Father!"

The old man's eyes first looked steadily into hers, then glanced in the direction of Sammy, who was happily sweeping the floor of their new "home."

"I'll put up the partitions, an' — everything you — want, Mother. I should be angry at Sammy for not standin' in for me whilst I was gone. But he seems to like what you did. I hadn't no idea you was so set on it as all this."

Sarah smiled. Her sudden change had broken his reserve and she had reached him at last.

THE REVOLT OF MOTHER

STUDENT ACTIVITY

1. In the story, what tasks did the men do? What tasks did the women do?

2. What were Father's main concerns? Mother's main concerns?

3. Before her "revolt," what decisions could Mother make? Father? Whose responsibilities do you consider to be more important?

4. If Mother went to a public meeting about changing the conditions for women, what kinds of things would she talk about? List these issues below:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

POLITICAL CHANGE THIRD WORLD WOMEN

In the past the fact that women were allowed to do only certain tasks and were limited in the kinds of decisions they could make created barriers to their full participation in their society. In "The Revolt of Mother," Mother's decision to assume the responsibility for where the family would live gave her more control over her life. It also changed her relationship with her family and gave them a new vision of how women could act within their family.

In this section we will see women's struggles to gain more control over their lives in spheres beyond their families. You will read stories about real women who helped to organize and fight against political systems that kept them down. These women were changers who wished to create a new political and social system where their concerns would be regarded as important and necessary.

STRUGGLE FOR CHANGE IN THIRD WORLD COUNTRIES

In these stories women are struggling for political change in Third World countries. These are countries which have been poor. Most have been controlled by foreign powers. In others, the masses of people have been dominated by a wealthy upper class or a racist government. Women in these countries feel that women's rights are not a separate issue from the problems of inequalities in all of their society. Therefore, at the time of these stories, some women in each country had made a decision to change the structures that oppressed everyone. They lived in times when the old ways were being challenged and when change was happening quickly. There were chances for men and women to escape from the way things had always been. They became aware of the possibilities of a new life and were excited about the chance to be part of change.

PERSONAL LIVES ARE CHANGED

Women who participated in the political struggles found that their personal lives also changed. As they learned new skills and became more aware of the things they could do, their relationships with people around them often became unsettled. Sometimes they met real resistance. People were comfortable relating to women as they had been. They were afraid that if women changed, a woman's family might fall apart or that women's morals might weaken.

Neither of these things happened. Usually, however, people had to make some adjustments which would allow women to participate politically.

WOMEN ORGANIZE TO WORK TOGETHER

One important way women participated in political struggle was that women gave each other strength through collective organizing (working together). As individuals speaking out they might have been ignored or cast out of their society. But working as a unit, women could speak with a powerful voice. Also, they could help each other develop the new skills they needed for the new tasks they were undertaking.

THE DEFIANCE OF WOMEN: SOUTH AFRICA

Now that you have touched the
women you have struck a rock,
you have dislodged a boulder,
you will be crushed

Women's Freedom Song, August, 1956

INTRODUCTION

South Africa is a country where the ruling whites, a minority and newcomers to South Africa, control all aspects of society. It is a country where even though blacks greatly outnumber whites, the ruling white government keeps itself in power through the use of modern weapons, police terror, imprisonment and torture. White South Africans are only 17.5% of the total population.

Blacks, the original inhabitants of South Africa, have very few rights. They cannot elect people to represent them and political organizations are limited. They are denied the housing, skilled jobs, health care and kind of education necessary for a decent life. For many years, the black South Africans have been used by the whites as a cheap source of labor. They have no real say over what jobs they might have or over the condition of their work. In this way whites keep themselves in positions of leadership at work and have a much higher standard of living than do black Africans. Even the poorest white family has at least one black servant or maid.

THE PASS SYSTEM

To maintain the oppression of the blacks, the white government created an extensive system of laws which keeps blacks and whites apart as much as possible. This is called "apartheid."

Blacks are forced to live in areas called "homelands," separate and apart from the whites. There is a pass system whereby all black Africans over sixteen must carry an identity "passbook" which shows where they live and work. In this way, the government regulates the number of blacks in the white areas. Certain blacks are allowed in to work, but must leave at night and return to the all-black communities, or must live in all-male dormitories near their work. Most black women are not allowed to work outside of their homelands. They cannot leave this area to find work to support their families, as they once did through trading, before the whites came.

In the homelands, the land is poor and the women scratch a living out of the brush and rock and try to raise a family. Disease and early death are common. Some women bury one baby after another and lastly bury the husband—a man, who, if away from the homelands for long stretches of time, was barely known to his family as a husband and father.

Women who are allowed to leave the homelands to work in white areas are offered only a few jobs. Often they are maids. They are poorly paid and sometimes made to live in rundown rooms. They are not allowed to have their family live with them. This prevents black Africans from living permanently and as families in the white communities, where housing, health care, education and services are vastly superior.

The passbook system also allows government officials to arrest blacks on the pretense that there is something wrong with their books. Arrests are frequent, and people who are arrested may be jailed or sent to work.

Until the mid-1950's, only men had to carry these "badges of slavery," as the passes are called. Then the government decreed that women, too, must carry them. The women at once responded by organizing a series of peaceful demonstrations against this new law. They were afraid that the government would use the passes to further separate them from their families, or arrest them, thereby leaving their children unprotected.

Throughout their history, many women in Africa have done things collectively. They farmed their fields, traded, and raised their children together. Politically they had a collective voice through their special all-women associations which had some power in their villages.

Although much of the power women once had is now lost in South Africa, they have repeatedly banded together to resist the racist control of the white government. The following story is an account of one time when they joined together to demonstrate against the newly created passbook laws for women.

*SHANTI'S STORY**

THE VILLAGE

August 1949: The villages were just beginning to stir in the pre-dawn light. Shanti woke with a start. The sound of heavy, running boots pounding the hard dirt between the huts shattered her dreams. Harsh male voices called out, "Where is your pass?"

Shanti heard her older brother's reply: "It's inside. Wait I'll get it."

Deep laughter followed this. "Don't bother. You are in violation of the law. Grab him!"

Scarcely breathing, Shanti peeked out through a chink in the mud wall. Helplessly, she watched as her brother was dragged off between two burly policemen.

For three months there was no news of him. When he returned he had a broken jaw and was sick and in rags. Taken before a court, he had been found guilty before he could plead his innocence. He was then handed over to the white farmers, whose trucks were waiting outside the courthouse, and forced to do farm work. Shanti was only nine, but she kept the memory of this pass raid in her heart.

THE WHITE AREA

August 9, 1956: Seven years later, almost to the day, Shanti again woke before the dawn had broken. Again she scarcely was breathing as she gathered her shawl over her shoulders and on bare feet crept out the door. Softly, softly she padded past the flowering shrubs and well-kept homes of the whites.

*Written by *In Search of Our Past* staff. Based on accounts from this period as cited in the bibliography for this unit.

Nandi was already waiting for her on the corner. Laughing with relief, the two friends threw themselves into each other's arms. "Did you have trouble getting away?"

"No, but can you imagine the look on my mistress's face when she finds me gone and realizes that for today she will have to take care of her own child! Today we are on strike!"

Nandi answered, "And can *you* imagine the look on the Prime Minister's face when he sees how many of us there are to demonstrate against the passes!"

Shanti was still thinking of her job. "You know, I love the baby I take care of. He is round and plump and happy. But I often cry at night wondering if my *own* baby gets enough to eat. I haven't seen him for almost a year, ever since I came here to work and had to leave my baby behind. He should be walking now and perhaps saying a word or two. My mother looks after him, but she has her hands full. He's never seen a doctor."

Nandi looked thoughtful. "I suppose I'm better off than you. I do get to see my husband one day a week because he works for the Sanitation Department. But he must leave the city before

sundown or be arrested! Because of this he is often harsh with me. Maybe if things were better I would get more respect from him."

Nandi's statement made Shanti cry out, "These passes which keep us apart from our families are evil! This time the government has gone too far. Once we women could go anywhere we wanted. Now we are told where we can or cannot go. We might as well be in jail."

Just then, coughing and sputtering, an old truck wheeled down the lane toward them. It barely slowed down and the girls had to leap to join their friends on the back of the truck. As the truck rounded the final corner, leaving the comfortable homes of the whites behind, one of the girls called out to a sleepy house-boy who was sweeping the steps, "Tell our Madams we won't be at work today!"

The girls laughed gaily, and the truck headed off toward the capital, Pretoria.

THE DEMONSTRATION

On that day, Shanti and her friends joined masses and masses of women who had gathered in the capital from all over South Africa. They were there to demonstrate against the government's decision to force women, like men, to carry passes. Traveling by car, bus, train or foot the women had left their children home with the men and had come to the capital to pour into the streets to protest. Altogether there were 20,000 women in Pretoria.

Because marches were forbidden, the women walked in groups of never more than three. Their destination was the Union Building, where they wished to give their protest petitions to the Prime Minister.

Walking with her little group, Shanti told them why she had gotten involved. She told them of her brother's arrest years ago. She told them of her fears for her baby now. "If they arrest my

mother, who would be left to take care of the baby?" She told them that she desperately feared the beatings and perhaps loss of her job when she returned to work today. But she had been very excited when a woman from her women's association had secretly told her about the demonstration. "Perhaps the best way to help my baby is to try to stop these new restrictions against women." She finally told her friends about a male friend who had laughed at the women's desire to fight. Shanti was angry. "He should wear skirts if he's going to let women fight alone against the government." But she liked him and was hurt when he said that he would stop seeing her if she got involved in the demonstrations.

Finally the Union Building was in sight. It was a beautiful building with pillared wings on either side. Trees, gardens and flowing lawns surrounded it. But, to Shanti, more beautiful was the slow stream of women who were now filling the lawns.

The colors were brilliant. There were the bright saris of the Indian women, the swirling robes of the African women, the colors of the women's associations. Some villages had their women wear identical robes or armbands.

When it seemed that everyone had settled, Lilian Ngoyi, one of the prime organizers, spoke to them:

> *The government can pass the most cruel and barbaric laws, but it will never stop the women in Africa in their forward march to freedom in our lifetime!*[1]

Lilian knocked on the Prime Minister's door. A nervous secretary opened the door a fraction—and reported that the Prime Minister was out. A number of women stepped forward and handed him bundle after bundle of protest forms. "You can go now," he almost pleaded. Then Lilian Ngoyi turned to the assembly. The women rose. They stood with their thumbs raised in the African salute for thirty minutes of silent protest. Even the

[1] "The Defiance by Women in South Africa," *The Africa Reader: Independent Africa,* Cartey and Kilson, eds., Vintage Books, N.Y., 1970, p. 312.

babies on their backs did not cry. Then they burst into song, the warrior song of the women—"you have struck a rock once you have touched a woman." The singing echoed over the city, touching everyone who heard it.

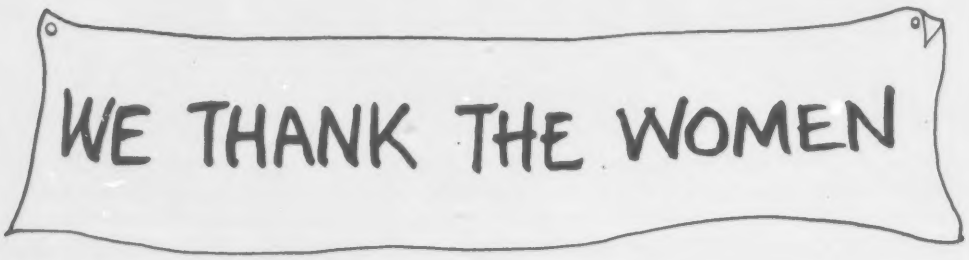
On the way back from the demonstration, Shanti and her friends were thrilled to see banners hung from the buildings—"WE THANK THE WOMEN." The men had hung up the signs and were supporting them! Shanti felt a surge of strength flow within her. Even if they were misused, abused and powerless, united with black men in the end they would win.

For Shanti, this demonstration was only the first step in her fight for her rights. Throughout the year women in all parts of South Africa demonstrated, rioted, and held assemblies to try to defeat this passbook law.

But this time, the government won. Old women attempting to collect their small pensions were told, "No passbook—no pension." Women could not keep their jobs without passes. In

some areas, women without passes were beaten and their homes burned. In the end, the passbooks were accepted.

August 9, 1956, now called Women's Day, is remembered, however, by all black South Africans. Demonstrations like this one showed women that they could unite in great numbers to fight. It also showed everyone the risks women were willing to take to fight for their rights. Women are unshaken in their belief that some day they will win.



THE DEFIANCE OF WOMEN: SOUTH AFRICA

STUDENT ACTIVITY

1. Suppose you are a black man in South Africa. In what ways would you be restricted? How would you feel?

2. Suppose you are a black woman in South Africa. In what ways would you be restricted? How would you feel?

3. What kinds of work did black women do in South Africa?

4. List the things Shanti and Nandi could *not* do as maids living in the white areas.

5. Why was the extension of the passbook law an important issue to Shanti?

6. How did the women organize?

7. What risks did the women take in organizing?

MISU, THE GUERILLA GIRL*

OLD CHINA

A bride is like a pack horse. She is broken in at the beck and call of every one. When she arrives at her husband's home, she is made to crawl under a saddle to signify her complete submission to work like a beast of burden until her dying day.

Such is the stupidity of woman's character, she must distrust herself and obey her husband . . .

Old Chinese sayings

These old sayings show the position of women in old China. Old China was a partly feudal society, where a small ruling class of rich landlords owned most of the land and exploited most of the people in cooperation with foreign powers. The gap between the rich and the poor was very wide. It was a society where social status, age and sex determined how important you were within your family and within society as a whole. Thus, a young peasant girl was at the lowest rung of the ladder because of her age, her sex, and her lack of wealth.

In Old China poor families rejoiced in the birth of sons, but thought that girl babies were unlucky and a burden. Girls were an extra mouth to feed and good only for hard work. When they grew up they would be married at an early age and they would belong completely to their husband's family. If their poverty was great, peasant families sometimes killed girls at birth, and/or sold their girls and women in times of famine.

*Adapted from Jack Belden, *China Shakes The World*, Monthly Review Press, New York, 1970 (first published 1949), pp. 217-219.

Girls were married at a very young age, often to men who were 15 or 20 years older than they. After marriage, their ties with their families were almost completely cut. The woman belonged to the husband and his parents. Mistreatment of the wife by her husband and especially her mother-in-law was common. A man could take additional wives, or sell them off as he wished. A woman, even after her husband died, could not remarry. Divorce was unheard of.

Women were expected to stay at home and do all the work there. They rarely had opportunities to meet with other women.

THE REVOLUTION

Since those days, there has been a dramatic change in the position of women in China. Most of it occurred as a result of the Communist Revolution. With Mao Tse-Tung as their leader, the Communists came to power in 1949 and began a program of enormous social, economic and political change, including changes by and for women.

Before the Communists were victorious, there were many years of military struggle during which changes in the lives of women were already occurring. The following story, "Misu, the Guerilla Girl," is told by an American journalist who interviewed Misu in the 1940's. China in the 1940's had been conquered by the Japanese Army (World War II). When these invaders were expelled, civil war broke out between the Communist army (the 8th Route Army) and the army of the government then in power (the Nationalists). The Communists worked mainly in the countryside, mobilizing women and men to fight against the old order and build a new society. Misu was one of the young women who joined this movement. Mao Tse-Tung had said,

> When women all over the country rise up, that will be the day of victory for the Chinese revolution.

Now China continues to be committed to creating equality between men and women. The Chinese realize that in order for their new society to succeed, the position of women must be upgraded. Now women do everything from heavy construction work to brain surgery. One of their slogans is, "Women hold up half the sky."

MISU, THE GUERILLA GIRL

She was quite husky, with stocky legs and heavy shoulders. Possibly nineteen. She had deep red cheeks and straight hair that fell to her shoulders.

She wore a pair of torn grey cotton pants, stained with recent mud, and a dirty wine-colored jacket. She was the daughter of a peasant farmer who had gone blind when she was young. Two of her sisters had starved to death in a famine and she had stayed alive by living in the fields with her grandmother and by eating raw vegetables.

Her name was Misu and she lived in the village of Kwangtai. When she was fifteen or sixteen, she was married and went at once to her in-laws' house, becoming not so much a wife as a maidservant. She ate only what was left after the other members of the family had eaten. Whenever she had an argument with her husband, he told his mother and the two of them beat her on the back and on the breasts, all the while telling her that she was a most ungrateful girl.

Often Japanese officers came to visit her mother-in-law, who made Misu serve the officers tea and cakes. She rebelled against these duties, for the Japanese generally molested her. After one such refusal, she was beaten in a very brutal fashion. In despair, Misu locked herself in her room, tied a rope over a beam and hanged herself. She lost consciousness, but she woke up some hours later with the broken rope around her neck and her bed smeared with blood.

Afterward, she was sick and could not work well. She was beaten even more severely and deprived of almost all food. Fearing for her life, she ran home. Her mother and father-in-law followed and broke into her house. Her grandmother fought viciously to prevent her from being taken away, but she was beaten to the ground. Neighbors came to her rescue. From then on she lived at home with her grandmother. The two of them, as before, barely survived on vegetables they grew on their small plot of ground. From time to time, Misu's husband and mother-in-law caught her and beat her. She lived in constant fear of being kidnapped.

About this time, the Japanese retreated and the Communist 8th Route Army, which had occupied the hills around Kwangtai, entered the town.

One day a girl leader of this army came to Misu's home and said: "Your neighbors tell me you have suffered much. Now a new day has come for Chinese women and there is no longer any need for you to suffer."

Because no one had ever shown her any sympathy before, Misu was completely won over by this girl's kindness. She confided her hopes to her grandmother—her only friend. The old woman agreed it would be wonderful if women were the equal of men, but dashed cold water on Misu's hopes. "From ancient times till now," she said, "man has been the Heaven, woman the earth. What chance do we have?"

Misu told her grandmother's words to her new friend. "You must organize," said the girl. "If we form a women's association and everyone tells their bitterness in public, no one will dare to oppress you or any woman again."

Much moved, the girl threw herself wholeheartedly into the work of organizing the women on her street. Because of her zeal she was elected head of the women's association on her block.

Misu learned a great deal at the association's "Speak Bitterness" sessions. Here women told of their bad treatment by their husbands and in-laws. This helped everyone see that they all suffered equally. Through the association Misu found that she had a talent for speaking in public. Through the aid of the women in her group she succeeded in obtaining a divorce from her husband. Excitement spread through her—it *was* possible to change things!

About this time, the war between the Communists and the Nationalists began. Kawangtai organized its own militia. Misu used to sit by the militiamen and watch them clean their guns. Soon she was cleaning the gun of each armed man on her street. She wanted to become a soldier, but the men laughed at her and only let her cook and mend their clothes. As a joke, they taught her how to fire a rifle, but always without bullets. In the meantime, the Communist government in the area gave her food.

Still Misu was not satisfied. She trained herself for combat by shooting wild animals in the hills. Later, she overcame her fear of hand grenades by standing on rocky ledges and throwing them into the river far below. After that the farmers let her carry arms and go on raids.

Because she knew Kwangtai well, she soon planned most of the raids. On such raids, she generally acted as the lookout for the militiamen. Once, however, she climbed over the wall of Kwangtai and participated in a gunfight. On this occasion two of the enemy were killed. "Maybe I shot one of them; I don't know," she said. The men, however, became very proud of her. They began to listen to her and ask her advice about strategy.

This girl could neither read nor write. She knew nothing of Communism. She had taken up arms, she said, because the soldiers of the 8th Route Army were the first who had ever been kind to the people of Kwangtai. If the 8th Route Army was beaten, her life would not be worth living. She was not ambitious. She just wanted to be a working girl. She thought China could build up industry, and she could work in a factory. She hoped she could have a marriage where she would be treated more as an equal. That would give her great satisfaction.

MISU, THE GUERILLA GIRL

STUDENT ACTIVITY

1. Describe the conditions of Misu's married life which led her to attempt suicide.

2. How did Misu's grandmother feel about Misu's plans to bring about change? Why did she feel this way?

3. What major things occurred that allowed Misu to change her life?

4. List the conditions women might have talked about in their **"Speak Bitterness" sessions.**

5. Describe some things Misu did which would have been considered a new role for women.

6. How do you know that Misu began to have more confidence in herself and her future?

WOMEN IN SOUTH AFRICA AND AND CHINA

	SOUTH AFRICA	CHINA	SHARED EXPERIENCES
Conditions to Be Changed			
Events Which Caused Political Change			
Goals			

	SOUTH AFRICA	CHINA	SHARED EXPERIENCES
Problems			
Effect of Organizing on: • **Family** • **Men** • **Society** • **Women's Personal Lives**			

WOMEN IN CUBA
Women Struggle to Create Changes within the Family

In the last lesson you read about women in the past who sought to improve their lives through active political involvement. In doing this, changes in their personal lives also occurred.

Today you are going to study about women in Cuba who have been able to move beyond this type of political activity.

In 1959, under the leadership of Fidel Castro, Cubans overthrew their old society and established a new one. In old Cuba the position of women was very low. Now, years after their revolution, Cuban women have many political and economic advantages. Yet there has remained a gap between this and their unequal role within their homes.

The new Cuban society has upgraded the position of women A first step after the revolution was to encourage women to work outside their homes and become active in the total life of the country. Cuba wanted women to work because (a) of the extreme shortage of labor and (b) women could only be made equal to men if they could support themselves.

The government helped women find meaningful work. Currently, women may work at any job. Women receive special training so that they can qualify for the jobs they want. "Equal pay for equal work" is a fact in Cuba. Many women no longer have to depend on men for money.

Haydée Santamarie, an important Cuban woman who has been active in Cuba's revolution, said:

> *The first step the Revolution has taken toward women liberating themselves is support. A woman must have economic support. Because how many women used to stay with a man and not leave him because if she left him what would she give her children to eat? How would it be for her children? And*

> *the poorest would say: "What am I going to give my children to eat?" The Revolution has emancipated women economically; it pays them the same salaries it pays men. It doesn't pay her for being a woman, but for the job she does.*[1]

As the Cuban government assisted women to find work outside the home, it also provided day-care centers for their children, as well as laundry, cafeteria and health services. These services are given free to families.

One interesting idea is the "shopping bag" plan. Working women may leave their shopping lists and bags at the grocery store in the morning and pick up their groceries at night as they return home from work.

All Cubans are expected to take part in decisions which affect their lives. This means that Cubans run their own lives in a new way. People are organized into discussion groups within their neighborhoods, at their work, or at their schools. There they may evaluate ways to improve their work and their neighborhood, and discuss any proposed law that would affect them. For example, any law that affected youth would be discussed at length in the schools. Students could ask that additions be made to the law, or that things be changed or taken out.

In these groups the people elect those who will represent or lead them—for example, their bosses at work. They may recall anyone who displeases them.

Cubans thus are asked to be very responsible for their lives. For women, whose opinions were generally ignored in old Cuba, this new expression allows them to be included in the life of the nation. However, even with the new society, new problems for women have appeared.

The family is the most resistant to change. About ten years after the revolution, Cuban women began to be clear about one fact. Although they now were doing things that they never would have thought possible, they were working harder than men. If

[1]Margaret Randall, *Cuban Women Now,* Toronto, Canada, 1974, p. 317.

they studied, or worked full time, or were involved in a political project, they were still expected to do all of the housework and child care when they got home. They were doing double duty and were getting tired. Further, this housework and old ideas about excluding women from politics were holding them back from participating in political life. Many more men than women were getting elected to positions of power.

The following dialogue is based on actual quotes taken from some Cubans who began to question the old roles of men and women within the family.

A WOMAN'S PLACE IS THE HOME?*

Setting: Havana, Cuba
Time: 1974
Cast: Elena, a housewife and worker
Ramon, her husband, a dock worker
Marta, neighbor and factory worker
Juan, Marta's son, about 24s years old

Elena and Ramon are relaxing before dinner. Elena is reading the newspaper. She sees this cartoon:

*Written by *In Search of Our Past* staff. Based on accounts from this period as cited in the bibliography for this unit.

Elena: Oh, what a great cartoon this is! Look, Ramon, that's the way it really is! Women work all day long—then they put in a second shift at home—doing housework!

Ramon: What do you mean? I thought you women wanted to work. It used to be that women weren't allowed to work like that in factories. Today they cut cane, work in factories, drive trucks, supervise—EVERYTHING! What's the matter? Don't you like your job?

Elena: Of course! My job is not the problem. The housework is the problem! I have *two* jobs, not one. Women are supposed to take part in everything today. They are supposed to attend meetings, make decisions, and study. But, who has time?

Ramon: Honey, you know how much better you are at housework. It's natural for women to do housework and take care of kids.

Marta, a neighbor, enters with Juan, her son: What are you two arguing about?

Elena: Ramon thinks that women are better at doing things around the house. Next he'll be telling me that a woman's place is in the home!

Marta: Everyone's talking about that topic lately. In the supermarket today, a man behind me said 'Shopping is really women's work. They're specialists.' A woman standing in back of him yelled at him, 'Oh sure. And some men are specialists at talking nonsense!'

Elena: It's true. Men have changed a little. But maybe we need rules written that will make everyone's duties clear. In the old days, men could say, 'Don't worry, honey, I'll support you. Or I'll defend you.' But now, since the Revolution, we women work,

and some of us even fought in battles. We took on new responsibilities. Now, men *must* help us with the housework and the children.

Marta: For sure. But cheer up, Elena. The young men are different these days. Juan, tell Ramon how you and Raquel plan your life after marriage.

Juan: Well, Raquel and I are friends as well as lovers. It's very important to me what she thinks and what she does. We both will be active outside the house, in jobs and in meetings. That means, we'll *both* share the work inside the house. But, my brother still calls his girl friend '*his woman*!' And he calls out to women on the street, 'Hey, you beautiful thing!'

Marta: Your brother is ten years older than you are. We brought you up differently. Everything changed. Why, when I was a girl, I couldn't be seen in the streets after 10 o'clock at night! Now, it's safe for women to be out alone any time.

Juan: Anyway, Ramon, women everywhere, in the cities and the countryside, all agree that men should share home responsibilities. We men can't change their minds about that!

Ramon: Well, I guess it's OK with me. I like this new society. People's lives are different now so our lives at home are bound to be different too. Maybe boys *should* learn how to do things for themselves around the house. OK Elena, how about *me* doing the dishes tonight?

THE FAMILY CODE IN CUBA

At the time that Elena and Ramon were discussing women's and men's responsibilities in the home, Cuban women everywhere felt that they were truly contributing to their new society. They felt needed and important. They felt that they had the right to make demands on their society, and they began to outline ways to make some changes in their homes

Cuban women were aware that throughout the world, the hardest attitudes to change were attitudes about the roles of women and men within their families. They saw that getting laws passed to insure their rights was one thing, but changing practices and personal feelings was another problem. *Women themselves decided to take steps to institutionalize changes in the family.* They took the following steps:

- Women met together to discuss their mutual problems. They decided that a law was needed that would define people's roles within their families.

- Women then took their concerns to their discussion groups at work, in the neighborhood, and at school. In these mixed groups they began to make their demands for shared household responsibilities.

- The government was forced to listen to them. It introduced a plan called "The Family Code" and asked everyone to discuss it, change it, and then vote on it.

- Everyone over sixteen got a copy of the Code. What followed was a lively debate. Even on the streets, on buses, and in waiting rooms people argued the pro's and con's of this proposed law. Some of the original law was changed as a result of suggestions resulting from this national debate.

- On March 8, 1975 (International Women's Day), the overwhelming majority of Cubans voted to pass the Family Code. It then became the law. It says that:

    - Husbands and wives shall share the housework and child care equally.

    - There is no such thing as an illegitimate child. Any child who is born is legitimate. All children therefore have equal rights.

    - Adopted children have the same rights as all others.

    - There shall be equal responsibilities for men and women in divorce and in child support.

    - Girl and boy children shall be treated equally in the home.

If anyone in the family disobeys this law, the local court, made up of people from the neighborhood, can send that person to work temporarily on a farm, or to a class for re-education.

ORAL INTERVIEW DIRECTIONS

STUDENT ACTIVITY

1. Make a date in advance with the woman you want to interview. In making this contact be sure to explain the purpose of of the interview and the topics you wish to cover.

2. Allow at least 30 minutes for the interview.

3. Begin the interview by explaining again the purpose of the interview and the topics you wish to cover. Be sure the interviewee consents to be interviewed.

4. Ask only one question at a time. Avoid questions which lead to yes-or-no answers. If you do get yes-or-no responses, ask for an explanation. "Could you explain a little more, please?" Or, "Why did you feel that way?"

5. Take your notes on a separate page.

6. Be patient. Remember, most people have never been interviewed. It is an unusual experience. A person must have time to think about her answer. If you act as if you are in a hurry, the other person doesn't feel that her answers are important to you.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Interviewee_____
Place of Birth_____

Interview a family member or another woman with whom you are comfortable. Begin by explaining to the interviewee the purpose of the interview and how you would like her to help. You might say, "We are doing a unit on Women in Change. We are interested in finding out about what women have done in their lives and what changes they have made."

1. Where were you living when you were my age?

   a. Where did you think you would be living as an adult?

   b. What caused this change, if there was any?

2. When you were my age, did you expect to continue your schooling? What happened? If there have been changes, what caused them?

3. When you were my age, did you think that as an adult you would work?

   What kind of a job did you think you would have?

   Have there been changes between your work expectations then and what you do now?

   What caused these changes?

4. When you were my age, did you want to get married?

5. Did you want to have children? What happened?

   If there have been changes between these expectations and your life now, what caused the changes?

6. What do you think have been the major turning points in your life? What caused them to happen?

7. What is one aspect of your life you would like to change?

8. Was there ever a time in your life when something happened that you didn't think was fair? What did you do about it?

9. Have you ever been involved in any activity or movement designed to change something? What? What role did you play?

10. Do you think that the women's movement has changed your life in any way? How?

BE SURE TO THANK THE WOMAN YOU INTERVIEWED.

THE INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S MOVEMENT

The ideas which were written into the Cuban Family Code and for which the women in South Africa and China have struggled are ideals toward which women all over the world aspire. Through their pressure, women around the world are bringing about change. It can be seen in the home, in the market, at school, and in the faces of political leaders. In 1977, a Gallup Poll was taken of people in 70 nations—representing 90% of the world.[1] People in these countries were asked:

> Do you think that the part played by women in your country is changing a great deal, a fair amount, not much, or not at all?

Their answers reflect what people felt about the changed roles of women in their country. Here are the results of the poll:

[1]From the poll "A World View of the Status of Women," by George Gallup, as it appeared in the San Francisco *Chronicle*, Spring 1978.

	Great Deal	Fair Amount	Not Much	Not at All	Don't Know
United States	63%	28%	6%	1%	2%
Scandinavia	47	33	18	1	1
Canada	45	42	11	1	1
United Kingdom	40	43	13	1	3
France	38	41	16	1	4
Australia	33	49	14	2	2
Italy	32	50	9	2	7
Japan	32	39	17	4	8
Benelux	31	43	21	2	3
West Germany	13	47	30	2	8
India	6	24	15	5	50
North America	61	29	7	1	2
Western Europe	30	45	18	2	5
Latin America	35	34	20	7	4
Africa	41	31	12	2	14
Far East	26	24	13	4	33

After he did this survey, George Gallup said, "Few social changes in the history of mankind have been so dramatic as that of the changing role of women."

Look at the results of the survey.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S MOVEMENT

STUDENT ACTIVITY

1. Which nation felt that women are changing the most?

2. Recall the countries where Misu, Shanti, Sara Penn (Mother), and Haydée Santamarie live. Without looking at the poll, speculate how you think people in those countries will respond to the question. Which country of the three do you think will indicate the least change in women's participation? Which country will indicate the greatest change? Develop a rationale for your speculations.

3. Look at the poll to see how exact your speculations were.

4. Are there omissions in this poll that bother you? Does the poll give you the information you need to discuss the countries you studied? Can you give an explanation for the lack of statistical breakdown on whole continents?

This logo represents the desires of women throughout the world. It was created for International Women's Year—1975. Can you see in it the symbols for peace, equality, and women?

This symbol is designed to represent the desire of women all over the world to improve their status. The American women's movement is a part of an international women's movement. American women seeking change have friends in every country in the world.

It is important that we continue to look around the world to see what women are doing and listen to what they are saying. In turn, what American women say and do has an effect on change elsewhere. This has been true in the past as well as today. For example, each year millions of women in almost all countries of the world gather in various activities to celebrate International Women's Day. Do you know about it?

- What day does it fall on?
- What is it about?
- How did it begin?

HISTORY OF INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY MARCH 8*

It was American women who gave the world International Women's Day—March 8—now celebrated throughout the world. Now it is celebrated as a day when women draw closer together in their common struggle for peace and justice.

On March 8, 1857, women from the garment and textile industry in New York staged a demonstration protesting low wages, the 12-hour workday and increasing workloads. They called for improved working conditions and equal pay for all working women. Their march was dispersed by police, some of the women were arrested, and some were trampled in the confusion. Three years later, in March of 1360, these women formed their own union and called again for these demands to be met.

On March 8, 1908, thousands of women from the needles trade industry in New York demonstrated for the same demands. But now, over 50 years later, demands for legislation against child labor and the right of women to vote had been added to demands for shorter working hours and better working conditions.

In 1910, at an International Socialist Congress, the German labor leader Clara Zetkin proposed that March 8 be proclaimed International Women's Day in memory of those earlier struggles of women for better lives. It was to be a day set aside to internationally commemorate women's struggles and historical contributions. The day was to be a celebration, as well, of women's current fights for equality and peace.

In the next 60 years, March 8 was celebrated mostly in socialist countries and by women's organizations in many other countries. In Cuba and China the emphasis was upon women as militant participants in revolutions, whereas in the Soviet Union

*"International Women's Day Curricular Materials," Laurie Olsen, Change for Children, San Francisco, 1974.

the celebration became similar to our Mother's Day. By 1967, the day began to be celebrated in the United States. In 1970, owing to the growing women's liberation movement, events were planned to celebrate the day in most of the major cities of the United States. In the past few years it has become a widely celebrated day for most women's organizations and groups. Schools, too, often acknowledge this day in some way.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

STUDENT ACTIVITY

1. What is International Women's Day?

2. List the different reasons for which this day has been celebrated in various countries.

3. What issues do you think Sara Penn, Misu, the women of Cuba and Shanti would select to celebrate on International Women's Day?

4. Would their husbands celebrate with them? Explain.

5. What issues do you think American women should raise at a celebration of International Women's Day? List.

6. Find out as much as you can about International Women's Year and share the information in class.